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*157*  
*121*  
*Printed by J. Johnson, No. 72, St. Paul's Church-yard.*  
*London.*  
**HIGH CHURCH POLITICS:**

BEING

A SEASONABLE APPEAL

TO THE

Friends of the British Constitution,

AGAINST THE

PRACTICES AND PRINCIPLES

OF

**H I G H C H U R C H M E N;**

AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE LATE OPPOSITION TO THE  
REPEAL OF THE TEST LAWS,

AND IN THE RIOTS AT BIRMINGHAM.

---

Verily, our High Church bigots and ragamuffins are the undoubted descendants of Diana's tories at Ephesus, sixteen hundred years ago. Nor is the breed one whit mended.

Pray mark the different manner of our disputing with them, and the contrary arguments we use! We appeal to the Bible; they cry 'the Church,' and answer the word of the Lord with a brickbat: oh! horrible!

*The Craftsmen.*

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L O N D O N:

Printed for J. JOHNSON, No. 72, St. Paul's Church-yard.

M.DCC.XCII.

E R R A T A.

Page 1, line 3, after *the*, insert *last*.

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 19,  | 20, dele <i>majority of the</i> .  |
| 21,  | 11, for <i>their</i> , read <i>the formality of a</i> .                  |
| 36,  | 7, for <i>the Bishops</i> , read <i>his</i> .                            |
| 54,  | 25, before <i>threatened</i> , insert <i>was charged with having</i> .   |
| 99,  | 14, for <i>Westminster Hall</i> , read <i>the House of Commons</i> .     |
| 109, | 19, for <i>his</i> , read <i>these</i> .                                 |
| 121, | 11, for <i>William</i> , read <i>Williams</i> .                          |
| 123, | 21, for <i>the</i> , read <i>its</i> .                                   |
| 146, | 21, after <i>dissatisfied</i> , insert <i>as the Reviewer supposes</i> . |
| 160, | 12, for <i>his</i> , read <i>their</i> .                                 |

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NOTE

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NOTE to page 29, line 3, after *compensation*.

THE sum granted by parliament in 1716, to make good these damages, was £.5579. 15s. 3½d.; being the amount returned by inquisitions taken on commissions issued out of the Court of Exchequer, in consequence of this address of the House of Commons.

The liberality of government was not confined to the above sum; for the distinguished loyalty of the Dissenters had been marked by the destruction of their property in other parts of the kingdom. At Manchester, &c. their places of worship were rebuilt at the public expence. This was before the Riot Act took effect. But that act has not been an excuse to government for withholding its bounty, in cases for which no compensation is provided. In 1716, the mug-house of one Read, in Salisbury-court, in Fleet-street, was attacked by a High Church mob. In defending himself he shot one of the rioters, and was tried for murder, and acquitted. The mob had destroyed part of the furniture in his house, but had not begun to demolish the house itself, in which case alone the hundred is bound to make good the damage. The magistrates read the proclamation in the Riot Act; and for staying beyond the limited time, five of the rioters were executed in Fleet-street. Read received £. 400 from government for his damages and charges; and one Gill also, who kept another mug-house in Cheapside, received at the same time £. 200 for his damages. In the riots in London, in the year 1780, damages sustained by Catholics to the amount of several thousands of pounds, which could not be recovered under the act, were paid by government. The Commons had resolved to address the King to make good the losses of the foreign ambassadors, and to prosecute the rioters; but upon his sending a message, that he had ordered such prosecution, the address was not presented. The chief magistrate of the city was prosecuted by the Attorney-general, without any application from the sufferers, for not having suppressed the riots in the first instance by the civil power: he was convicted, and escaped punishment only by death.

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## INTRODUCTION.

**A**MONG the numerous pamphlets circulated by the High Church party about the time of the motion in the House of Commons respecting the repeal of the Test Laws, there was none so much applauded and admired by them, as the "Review of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters," which has been very generally, but in charity I hope *falsely*, ascribed to the pen of Dr. Horsley, the Bishop of St. David's. The Reverend Spencer Madan seems to have a high opinion of this performance, and to credit this report; for in his letter to Dr. Priestley he says, "There is one publication, it is true, which, perhaps, it will be kind in me to recommend to your perusal, from your known passion for controversy, as I think you may employ yourself upon it during the rest of your life, provided you will undertake for once, not merely to answer, but refute, its arguments. It is entitled a 'Review of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters;' not that I expect you will feel disposed to meddle with it, *as I suspect it may be traced to the same powerful and victorious hand under which you have already smarted.*"

B

Sir

Sir Henry Englefield, in a letter addressed to Bishop Horsley, has pathetically conjured him to deny the publication, if he was not the author, that certain charges against the Catholics, contained in it\*, might not be circulated under the sanction of so great an authority. He has conjured in vain, for the Bishop has not denied the publication.

Who is really the author of the "Review" is not a matter of much consequence to the public, or myself. He may have reasons for concealing his name, and I am not disposed to enquire into them; it is enough for my purpose, and a sufficient justification for having selected from this work the arguments of the High Church party, that they themselves triumphantly applaud it. With them it is a model of excellence; and in truth so it is, if excellence can consist in a total want of charity and candour; in contradiction and inconsistency; in weakness and sophistry; in misrepresentation and falsehood. For treating such a work and its author with asperity, no apology is necessary. The unlicensed plunderer of private property sins less

\* The case which is professed to be reviewed is that published in 1787, and the Review was written, if not printed, in that year, though not published till 1790. Its author gives his readers to understand, that "as the real case of the Dissenters *is not altered* (however the words of it have varied yearly), the tract is published as it was originally written, without the least variation." The fact is, that the *cases* published between 1787 and 1790 were materially altered, and in particular *all that related to the Catholics* was omitted. My readers may from this instance judge how far the reviewer has written under the influence of truth.

against



against society, than he, however exalted his rank, who scruples not deliberately to sacrifice truth and justice on the altar of controversy.

That the "Review" remained long unanswered by the Dissenters may be owing to this circumstance, that though it was printed two years before, it was artfully kept from the public till a few weeks only preceding the last debate; and *after* the debate it was not likely that an answer would be much attended to. But there is another reason still more strong; for the Dissenters felt themselves so little pressed by its arguments, that, but for the plaudits of their enemies, it might have passed for ever unnoticed by them. On the part of the Catholics, Lord Petre and Sir Henry Englefield have attacked it with much spirit and success. The latter in particular has shewn, that its author can have no pretensions to the character of a logical reasoner, or a moral man.

It was, at one time, my intention to have answered the "Review" at some length, but recollecting that this incomparable performance had passed through only *one* edition, and the public opinion had stamped its insignificance, I have abandoned the design, and feel the less regret at having done so, since I have just had an opportunity of seeing a late excellent publication, intitled "*Observations on the Test Laws in Reply to A Review of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters.*"

It has been so confidently asserted of late, that the political principles of the Dissenters are hostile

to, and those of the Church congenial with, the constitution of Britain, that it becomes necessary to enquire what those principles really are; the tenets of the Church of England are therefore freely discussed in the following pages; but the reviewer, in common with other High Church writers, has provoked it. When he, tauntingly, attributes to Nonconformists, principles, “ which “ in certain situations and certain times would render them *not the best* subjects of the British constitution,” he forgets that passive obedience and non-resistance are still the avowed principles of the Church, and that there is too much reason to apprehend that in *no* situation, and at *no* time, can a believer in *all* its doctrines be a faithful subject to *our present* free constitution.

The clergy of the Church of England may be divided into two classes, the HIGH and the LOW Church. The latter wish well to the general cause of religion, and prefer its interests to those of their own or any other sect. They see no danger in reforming, as occasion requires, the errors of an establishment, and adapting it to the existing state of mankind; and trust for its security to the intrinsic worth of its doctrines, and its hold on the affections of the people. The former would advance *their own sect* in preference to true Christianity, and mixing politics with religion, would sacrifice its dearest interests to promote the temporal concerns of their party in the state. Having no dependance on the power of religion unaided by the civil government, and yet claiming a divine commission, they will allow of no alteration in  
the



the established system, and oppose the cry of “ the danger of the church,” to every attempt at improvement. To such clergymen, and to *such only*, I beg may be applied the seemingly harsh expressions, in which I have occasionally expressed my sentiments of the conduct of our ecclesiastical politicians. I can say with Bishop Horsley, “ We are engaged in a subject in which I hold it my duty to display my argument in its utmost force, and even to use pretty freely that *high seasoning* of controversy, which may interest the reader’s attention; but I would not wilfully give offence by harsh words, from which the reasoning may acquire neither force nor lustre\*.”

Bishop Horsley is the only man bold enough to make it his *public pretension, his pride, and his glory*, to be called a HIGH CHURCHMAN; not indeed, he tells us, as a bigot to the secular rights of the priesthood, but as enjoying a *spiritual* commission for the administration of our Lord’s proper kingdom, which makes those to whom it is delegated something more than the mere servants of the state†. The first question is, *whence and how* this spiritual authority is vested in the present clergy. Bishop Horsley, in another work‡, strongly

\* Bishop Horsley’s Tracts in controversy with Dr. Priestley.

† The Charge of Samuel Lord Bishop of St. David’s to the Clergy of his Diocese at his primary Visitation in 1790, p. 34.

‡ Tracts in controversy with Dr. Priestley, by Samuel Lord Bishop of St. David’s. 1789. p. 291, 292, 293.

intimates that it has been derived from the apostles by perpetual succession ; but as Bishop Warburton (who yielded to no bishop in christendom in sticking for the rights of his church as far as they were tenable) has admitted the apostolical succession was lost in the English Church at the revolution, we will leave Bishop Horsley to overthrow what his brother more wisely admits\*, and support the *jure divino* right of episcopacy as he can. He seems to have given judgment against himself when he says, that “ in every church, connected like our church “ with the state by an establishment, *even the spiritual “ authority cannot be conferred without the consent of “ the supreme civil magistrate,*” for this makes the efficacy of the transmission of this authority to depend on human laws.

But though it should be admitted that ecclesiastics may *possess* spiritual authority derived from some other source, they can claim to *exercise* it here only as they do their secular rights, by virtue of the law of the land ; and therefore, in the exercise of it, stand in the relation of mere *hired servants*

\* Bishop Horsley calls in question the spiritual authority of some dissenting ministers, in rather gentler terms than an honest Nonjuror did that of the whole body of the English clergy after the loss of the apostolic succession at the revolution. According to Dr. Hickes, “ Their prayers are null ; their sacraments “ are no sacraments ; their absolutions null and of no force ; “ God ratifies nothing in heaven which they do in his name “ upon earth ; they, and all that adhere to them, can claim “ no benefit of God’s promises, nor remission of sins, through “ the merits of Christ’s blood ; nay, though they should die “ martyrs their martyrdom would not be accepted.”

to

to the state. If the Church still possesses some spiritual authority beyond what human legislation can convey, let us beseech Bishop Horsley to explain (among other difficulties) \* how the non-juring bishops at the revolution could possibly be deprived of it by an act of parliament, and why the spiritual commission of the bishops consecrated by them after deprivation was not valid; for all that was more than human legislation could convey certainly rested in them, and as certainly might be transmitted by them to others. Let him tell us too, how other bishops could be suspended from the exercise of their spiritual commission by the sentence of lay judges, or wholly deprived of it by the ordinances of temporal legislators; and why it was necessary for English prelates to have the sanction of the state for the delegation of this spiritual authority, *without any secular rights whatever*, to the bishops in America. In explaining these difficulties, no arguments drawn from the hypothesis of an alliance between church and state can be admitted, unless it is first shewn that such an alliance is the foundation of the established church of England. Dr. Horsley asserts the divine commission of the episcopal ministry †, and is of opinion that it is of apostolical institution, and that the succession has been regularly deduced from the time of Christ, or his apostles. This succession, if traced from the apos-

\* These, and other difficulties here alluded to, will be more fully stated when the sheet anchor of modern High Churchmen, the hypothesis of an alliance between church and state, is under consideration.

† Preface to Tracts in controversy with Dr. Priestley.

ties, must be through *the pope and his bishops*, or, if from Christ, through *a race of jure divino kings*; and it will be curious to see, in this enlightened age, *through which* he will chuse to attempt the derivation.

I am not disposed to feel animosity against any men, because they differ from me in opinion, or maintain their own sentiments by fair argument; but I hold in abhorrence the depravity of which the High Church clergy and their followers have lately given striking instances, in the wicked arts too successfully used to inflame the passions of the people against the Protestant Dissenters. I acknowledge with pleasure, that among the established clergy there are many men of liberal minds and exemplary characters; men, who cannot approve the conduct of the High Church party, or condescend to wield, as the weapons of controversy, calumny and falsehood. With them I cordially unite in good wishes for the long continuance of our present happy form of government, consisting of a king, lords, and commons; and though my regard for the Church of England has been somewhat diminished of late, I am not *yet* an enemy to church establishments in general, especially in countries where they have long prevailed. I am not inclined to object to the state's giving a preference to that religion which is approved of by the majority of the people; nor have I discovered that there is any thing sinful in an episcopal form of church government. I “ can see without pain  
“ or

“ or grudging, an archbishop precede a duke;” and “ a bishop of Durham, or a bishop of Winchester in possession of ten thousand pounds a year.” But an establishment, whatever may be its form, ought to be accompanied with the enjoyment of religious liberty, in the fullest extent, by those who dissent from it: justice requires that they should labour under no penalties or disabilities on account of their religious opinions. Here indeed the Church of England stands in need of great reformation; for, according to the mistaken notions of former ages, she *still* absurdly claims a power to persecute. Nor are her principles respecting civil liberty consistent with our present free constitution. It is not therefore surprising that the zealots for the Church should oppose the just claims of the Dissenters, or defame the best friends of *that* constitution as seditious subjects; but it is only from a total ignorance of the principles of High Churchmen that the nation at large can be induced to fall in with their party schemes. Let the people of England, and especially the *true* Whigs, beware; let them remember that the High Church party has unfortunately made a conspicuous figure in the annals of England, and constantly exerted its influence for the destruction of the present constitution, and uniformly, though sometimes covertly, supported the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. The danger of the Church, whether real or pretended, has ever been its watchword, and the instant that signal has been given, as by some powerful magic, all liberality of sentiment,



ment, all charity and candour have disappeared among them. *By that cry*, in the reign of queen Anne, the throne had nearly been restored to the Stuart race; *by that cry*, seditious tumults were raised to prevent the accession of the present family, and two rebellions excited against the monarchs of it\*; and *by that cry*, as may be seen in the ensuing pages, though more faintly expressed, the

\* The following extract from the speech of George I. to both houses of parliament, on September 21st, 1715, strongly proves this.

“ It was scarce to be imagined, that any of my protestant subjects, who have known and enjoyed the benefits of our excellent constitution, and have heard of the great dangers they were wonderfully delivered from by the happy revolution, should by any arts and management be drawn into measures that must at once destroy their religion and liberties, and subject them to popery and arbitrary power; but such has been our misfortune, that too many of my people have been deluded, and made instrumental to the Pretender’s designs, *who had never dared to think of invading us, or raising a rebellion, had he not been encouraged by the success his emissaries and adherents have already had in stirring up riots and tumults, and by the farther hopes they entertain of raising insurrections in many parts of my kingdoms.*

“ *The endeavouring to persuade my people, that the church of England is in danger under my government, has been the main artifice employed in carrying on this wicked and traitorous design.* This insinuation, after the solemn assurance I have given, and my having laid hold on all opportunities to do every thing that may tend to the advantage of the church of England, is both unjust and ungrateful; nor can I believe so groundless and malicious a calumny can make any impression upon the minds of my faithful subjects; or that they can be so far misled as to think the church of England is to be secured by setting a popish Pretender on the throne.”

Dissenters

Dissenters were defeated in their last application to obtain a repeal of the Test Laws, and a spirit of savage bigotry raised, which destroyed the property and endangered the lives of peaceable subjects. Such is the formidable power of the church, even in this enlightened country, when its *priests* think fit to work upon the prejudices of their bigotted followers\*! Through those prejudices an apprehension of danger may be instilled in the midst of security and peace, and the social intercourse of life converted into bitter jealousy and hatred.

\* The power of the clergy, and their influence over the minds of the people, are well described in the following passage:  
 “ Crowned heads always have thought it their interest to keep  
 “ measures with them : ministers of state have not been able to  
 “ trick successfully, and play the knave, without their leave  
 “ and assistance ; they take advantage, and make their market  
 “ of all factions and disturbances in states, and apply them to  
 “ their own benefit ; knaves shelter themselves under their  
 “ protection ; hypocrites court, and seem to admire them, and  
 “ bigots and enthusiasts adore them. Every event of life  
 “ contributes to their interests : they christen ; they educate ;  
 “ they marry ; they church ; they bury ; they persuade ; they  
 “ frighten ; they govern ; and scarce any thing is done without  
 “ them. Notwithstanding all this, they roar aloud that they  
 “ cannot keep their ground,” &c. The Independent Whig,  
 vol. i. p. 85.

## C H A P T E R I.

*Of the conduct of the Clergy and High Churchmen, in opposition to the Repeal of the Test Laws.*

AT four different periods between the revolution and the accession of his present Majesty, the Dissenters had applied to parliament for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts.—The princes upon the throne had always favoured their pretensions; and the ministers of state, in the two first instances, exerted the influence of the court in their support; and in the two latter acknowledged their *right*, but lamented that a disputed throne, and the critical situation of public affairs, did not permit them to interfere in their favour. For nearly half a century afterwards the Dissenters retired from public notice; but at a season when peace was within our walls, and prosperity within our cities; when the throne was perfectly established, and the administration of public affairs in the hands of a minister possessing the confidence both of king and people, they ventured again to appeal to the justice of their country. They had every reason to expect a favourable issue. The intellect of man had “certainly made rapid improvement” since their claim had undergone public discussion; and, as they



they hoped, had prepared the way for their more liberal treatment. They flattered themselves that the reigning monarch would *now* be at liberty to give full effect to the wishes of his ancestors, and shew favour to a body of loyal subjects, to whose steady attachment his family had been more than once indebted for the crown. And it was not natural to expect that a son of the great Earl of Chatham should be the “issue of his loins” only, and “not the child of his principles.”

In the beginning, therefore, of the year 1787, the dissenting laity in London were encouraged to bring their grievances again before parliament. In so doing they were impelled by no factious motives, and so far from having the remotest intention to *disturb* the settled government of the country, they *fully expected* the favourable concurrence of those in power. A deputation of their body waited upon the minister, as on former occasions, to communicate their intention; but they were not received with the same cordiality as their ancestors had been by his predecessors in office, for he neither acknowledged their *right* to relief, nor expressed his *wishes* for their success. He only told them “that he could not give an *immediate opinion* “on an affair of such *magnitude*.” His anxiety to form an *unprejudiced* opinion may be proved by the *disinterested* persons he advised with, for he consulted—the *bishops*. On the 10th of February, his mitred counsellors had a formal meeting, and resolved (as might reasonably be expected) that

the claim of the Dissenters should be opposed; and that to prevent invidious reflections on the church, the clergy should not openly take any part, but leave the minister to pursue the necessary measures to defeat the motion, in whatever form it should be made in the house of Commons. These orders instantly removed the film of ignorance, and worked conviction on the mind of the minister as by an immediate revelation from heaven; but he did not condescend to give to the Dissenters, either formally, or through the medium of any friend, the smallest intimation of his intention to oppose them. On the 28th of March the motion was introduced into the House of Commons, and he was then prepared, to the *surprise* and sorrow of the Dissenters, not only to give a decided opinion, but, with the zeal of a proselyte, to exert the influence of the court to prevent even the appointment of a committee for considering their situation and grievances.

The bishops, better acquainted with the character and principles of the minister than the Dissenters, were perfectly at ease after they had placed the cause of the Church in his hands. We certainly may presume that there was not at that time the most distant probability “ of the Dissenters “ carrying their point,” for the cry of “ the danger of the Church,” was not then heard; and the republication of a treatise of Bishop Sherlock against the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, with the addition of a blasphemous dedication to Mr. Pitt (said to have been written by one since rewarded with a mitre), was the *only* attempt at  
 I argument

argument on the part of the establishment. Every precaution was sedulously employed by High Churchmen to prevent the public curiosity from being awakened, and a discussion dangerous to the claims of the Church provoked.

This apparent moderation was the effect of policy, not of principle; for at this crisis the "Review of the Case of the Protestant Dissenters" was ready for publication. Hence may the true Whigs of England learn, that the *spirit* of the party is the same at all times, and that High Churchmen "rise up rebels" to the cause of liberty, even *before* their chieftains think it prudent "to pipe them to the field."

The cause of the Dissenters in the House of Commons having been defeated, not by reason and argument, but a majority of 78 votes, a similar motion was made in the year 1789, which met a similar fate. The conduct of the High Church party was still governed by the same prudential motives, and the minister again fought their battle; but the majority upon the second motion being reduced from 78 to 20 votes only, the Dissenters persevered, and, in the year 1790, declared their intention again to take the sense of a House of Commons, in which the decreasing majorities of a hostile minister afforded a good omen of ultimate success.

A general election approaching, the minister began to be seriously alarmed, and again called together his spiritual guides for advice. In truth, some exertion was highly necessary; for the eloquence  
with

with which the cause of liberty had been supported within doors, and the ability with which it had been enforced by publications without, had reached people of all ranks, and were in danger of carrying conviction into every quarter. In this tremendous situation the High Church party was forced to muster its forces, and begin the attack in form. There was no prospect of arresting the progress of truth and reason, but by alarming the fears, and inflaming the passions of the weak and ignorant. For this purpose every dishonest artifice was practised, and the ingenuity, even of the Clergy, exhausted, in discovering new modes of seduction. Prelates, in direct violation of the first principles of the constitution, and of that decency of conduct, which gives the highest lustre to the dignity of their sacred function, not only openly interfered in the election of members to serve in parliament, but prostituted their spiritual power to influence the votes of their clergy. “ The Society for promoting “ Christian knowledge” in general \*, and so not confined to promote the prosperity of any particular sect, regardless of the object of its institution, at a meeting *to which all the members were not summoned*, where Bishop Halifax presided as chairman, and Bishop Horsley moved the resolutions, resolved that “ *the most distant probability* of the success “ of the application, would be a cause for the “ greatest apprehension and alarm.” And thus

\* This society is, *jointly with the king of Denmark*, engaged in maintaining a mission to the East Indies.

tremblingly

tremblingly alive for the security of the church, they pathetically “ invited and *conjured* their brethren *in all parts* of the kingdom, as they valued “ the blessings, civil and religious, of the British “ constitution, and would transmit them entire to “ their posterity, to co-operate with the members “ of that society with firmness and vigour in the “ common cause.” These resolutions were dispersed through the kingdom, and this alarm, expressly founded on no more than a *distant* probability, raised the cry of the *immediate* danger of the Church, and its bigots triumphed for a moment in the deception. In some places the clergy, thus pathetically conjured, met together, and came to public resolutions against the application of the Dissenters; and a few of the laity, in different parts of the kingdom, followed their example. Some of these resolutions, which will be observed upon in the ensuing chapters, breathed a spirit equally inimical to civil as religious liberty.

The liberal spirit of the times prevented the machinations of these clerical politicians from having the wished-for effect. The meetings both of clergy and laity, though dignified by the presence of officers of his Majesty’s household, were but few in number, and in general thinly attended. Other expedients therefore, less honourable, but more likely to be successful, were resorted to. The press groaned under the load of publications and republications, filled with the grossest calumny and abuse; the danger of the Church, and the peril of innovation,

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were



were echoed from the pulpits, and circulated through the kingdom in the government prints; in short, the most scandalous artifices were employed by clergymen and courtiers to poison the minds of our legislators. As one instance among many, immediately preceding the debate, when no time was left for explanation, printed papers were distributed among the members of the House of Commons, purporting that one gentleman (educated in the principles of the Church, but afterwards distinguished by his writings against the Trinity, and so liable to prosecutions both in the ecclesiastical and temporal courts) had said, that the Dissenters, with whom he had then associated himself, had further objects in view, and that “ *he did not value the repeal of the Corporation and Test acts the nip of a straw:*” and falsely asserting of another gentleman, that he had openly declared, “ that their” (the Dissenter’s) “ intentions were to remove the liturgy “ from the church, and to abolish tythes.” These trivial circumstances, both supposed to have occurred in the same county, and at the same meeting, were magnified into open declarations of hostility from *the whole body* of Protestant Dissenters, and passed for “ confirmations strong as proofs of holy “ writ,” that there was a regular plan formed for the reformation of the doctrines of the establishment, and the destruction of the funds now destined for its support. It will be hardly credited that these absurd and improbable charges (which afterwards

terwards turned out to be wholly unfounded in fact)\* passed current in the House of Commons upon the single unauthenticated testimony of a *common weaver*, and occasioned much angry declamation in the course of the debate.

Some passages from a work published by Dr. Priestley were also infamously garbled by the clergy †, and so put together as to bear a very different meaning from that which the context gave them. These were sent to every member immediately previous to the debate, and created a strong prejudice against the cause of the Dissenters. Furnished with these materials, Mr. Burke trembled with apprehension lest the fall of despotism in France should work the destruction of liberty here. Deceived himself, and misleading others, he so worked by his splendid oratory upon the passions of the assembly, already inflamed by these scandalous practices, that in a moment of panic, as strongly impressed upon the majority of the House as if an armed enemy had beset the door, the motion for relief of the Protestant Dissenters was negatived by a great majority. Upon this occasion the High Church party put forth all its strength, with a view to lay the question at rest in future ‡. Vain hope! the cause of truth and justice depends

\* See Mr. Cooper's Letter to Mr. Burke, and the Reverend Mr. Toulmin's Letter to Mr. Plumble.

† The Reverend Spencer Madan, Rector of St. Philip's, in Birmingham, speaks with approbation of these scandalous extracts. See his Letter to Dr. Priestley, p. 12.

‡ See Mr. Burke's speech.

not on a vote of the House of Commons ; nor is oppression less grievous because the oppressor proudly justifies the wrong.

By these arts victorious, the Church may blush for her success ; by these arts repulsed, the Dissenters feel no humiliation in defeat. They can reflect with an honest pride, accompanied with a glow of indignation, on the event of a debate, in which even the eloquence and manly reasoning of Mr. Fox were unable to resist a sudden impulse of prejudice and passion. They can look back with gratitude and admiration to the exertions of that great statesman, in whom a life of political warfare has not deadened those benevolent affections of the heart, which best adorn and dignify human nature. He forgave his enemies, when under oppression they wanted his assistance ; and in the cause of liberty forgot his own wrongs, and stood forward the protector and friend of those who had injured him. When, under such auspices, the Dissenters shall renew their application, and renew it they certainly will, they hope to be indulged with a candid hearing, trusting that neither their general principles, nor the immediate object of their pursuit, will be again so shamefully misrepresented, nor misrepresentations to their prejudice so incautiously believed.

The public attention has been roused to the situation of Nonconformists in this country, and the discussion of their rights has spread far and near a knowledge of the true principles of civil and religious



gious liberty. In this situation High Churchmen may think fit to abandon those topics, on which they have hitherto most relied. We may hear no more of an *essential* or *inseparable* connection or alliance between the State, and its creature the Church; of the fitness of the ecclesiastical constitution to assimilate with the civil, to which its doctrines are directly repugnant; of the moderation of the Church, while its courts are open for the persecution of sectaries, and its followers destroy their habitations and property without waiting for their sentence; or of the *complete* toleration of *all* Dissenters, while disabilities are the punishment of their religious opinions, and many of them may be forced to abjure the realm, or be hanged as felons.

The moderation of the Dissenters makes a striking contrast with the furious and intemperate zeal of their adversaries, and it is to be hoped they will persevere in the same line of conduct. But neither the fate of their last application to the House of Commons, nor the destruction of their property at Birmingham, can terrify, or subdue them into silence. To retire from the public eye, and abandon the pursuit of justice at this juncture, might be construed into a mean and timid acquiescence under the calumnies of their enemies, and a surrender of those rights which they have taken upon themselves to vindicate. The Minister and his High Church friends have put the matter upon an issue that admits of *no compromise*; the Dissenters are now told they have *no right* to what they ask, and that their principles are hostile to the civil constitution of their country.

country. The high spirit of independence, which makes them proudly forego the advantages of the establishment, will not permit them, like spaniels, to fawn and crouch, and lick the hands of those who have thus ill-treated them. The same peaceable and quiet, but at the same time dignified and steady, conduct which has hitherto marked all their proceedings, we doubt not will distinguish them in future; and they may hope for a happy issue in their appeal from a decision made under the influence of party and passion, to one when reason shall have resumed her wonted ascendancy over the minds of our legislators.

## CHAPTER II.

*Of the Conduct of High Churchmen, respecting the late Riots at Birmingham.*

THE spirit of bigotry once roused is boundless in its fury, and the jealousy of priests is ever vigilant and cruel. The exultation of High Churchmen upon their victory in the House of Commons was of short duration. The vigorous efforts of the sons of freedom in France, and the pleasure which glowed sympathetically in the breasts of Englishmen to see the blessings they enjoyed extended to a large portion of Europe, inspired new and greater apprehensions. The French revolution, and the principles of the British constitution, became alike the common topics of abuse from their pulpits, and the Dissenters and friends of Gallic liberty were indiscriminately stigmatized as republicans and traitors. The anniversary of that revolution was intended to be celebrated by convivial meetings in most of the principal towns of England, and the High Church party eagerly prepared for that opportunity of taking vengeance on their enemies. They were not so successful in other places as at Birmingham, whose inhabitants, on more than one occasion before, had approved themselves the willing instruments of outrage, in the hands of jacobites and priests.

Warwickshire had been the favourite district of Sacheverell, he had been supported in both houses of parliament by its most powerful families, and through it he made a triumphal progress after his conviction. He continued for many years afterwards to preach sedition at Sutton, where he was frequently attended by the fanatical inhabitants of Birmingham. He had preached to some of them on the Sunday preceding the coronation of George the First, and, as it seems, not without effect; for on the day of the coronation, a number of friends to the Hanover succession were dining together at a tavern, in order to celebrate the happy event, when their festivity was interrupted by a riotous mob, crying out, "Sacheverell for ever, and down with the Whigs," who broke the windows of the house where they were assembled, and obliged them to disperse. *Then* it was a crime at Birmingham to exult in the security of British liberty; *now* it is a crime to rejoice at the downfall of despotism in France!

A few months afterwards, the inhabitants of Birmingham had a further opportunity of manifesting their hostility to our present happy constitution, and their disloyalty to ~~their~~ sovereign. A mob from Wolverhampton and the neighbourhood had committed great outrages in the county of Stafford, and demolished several Presbyterian meeting-houses. The riots had proceeded to such a height, as to engage the attention of parliament, and a Mr. Bayly, being examined before the House of Commons, gave the following account:

"That

“ That there are three Presbyterian meeting-  
 “ houses, not very remote from each other, at Dud-  
 “ ley, Bromwich, and Oldbury, and the proprie-  
 “ tors of them observing, that the several meeting-  
 “ houses in those parts had been pulled down by the  
 “ mob, they advised with lawyers about the law-  
 “ fulness of defending themselves, and then took  
 “ a resolution to do it, and assist each other. They  
 “ procured a warrant from Sir Henry Gough, to  
 “ the constable of Bromwich, to keep sufficient  
 “ watch, and when the mob came thither, they  
 “ were beaten off with handwhips and cudgels,  
 “ under the smart of which they fell on their knees,  
 “ asked pardon, *and prayed for King George*; but  
 “ the next day they came in greater numbers,  
 “ with scythes, reaping-hooks set in proper handles,  
 “ about two yards long, large clubs, and some fire-  
 “ arms; but as soon as they came up to the guard,  
 “ their courage failed them, they flung down their  
 “ arms, (many of which were picked up) and  
 “ scampered. Thirty-six of them were taken, and  
 “ placed in an inn, that they might be carried be-  
 “ fore a justice of peace the next day; *but at twelve*  
 “ *o’clock at night there came a mob from Birmingham,*  
 “ *intending to release them; they fired upon the guard,*  
 “ *attacked the house, and broke it, but the guard beat*  
 “ *them off, and took several prisoners, whom Sir*  
 “ *Henry Gough sent to Stafford jail.* The rabble, still  
 “ outrageous, came the next day, and fired upon  
 “ the guard, who being by that time furnished also  
 “ with fire-arms, the mob fled at the first fire. A  
 “ gentleman had his horse shot under him, and  
 “ another

“ another was mortally wounded. Some of the  
 “ guards were wounded. They took several prisoners, amongst which are the *two captains, one of*  
 “ *them the public cryer of Wolverhampton*; some of  
 “ the prisoners were found to be Papists. Being  
 “ asked at their examination who set them to work,  
 “ two of them said, they were told that two gentlemen of note, Mr. Vernon and Mr. Lane,  
 “ would give sixty guineas a-piece, and the latter  
 “ be their leader. When the rabble pulled down  
 “ the meeting-house at Wolverhampton, one of  
 “ their leaders getting on the top of it, flourished  
 “ his hat round his head, and cried, ‘ *G—d d—n*  
 “ *K— G—ge and the Duke of Marlborough.*’ A  
 “ fellow at the same place, standing by as a spectator  
 “ only, was charged by the rebels with being a spy,  
 “ and, to atone for his supposed offence, they made  
 “ him go down on his knees, and cry, ‘ *God blefs*  
 “ *King James the Third*’ \*.” The House of Commons, after this evidence was given at the bar, and a letter, containing a further account of these tumults, had been read by Mr. Bracebridge, a member, resolved unanimously, that an address should be presented to his Majesty, for the insertion of which, and the following interesting papers concerning the riots in Staffordshire, I hope my readers will think no apology requisite.

“ Most Gracious Sovereign,

“ We, your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal  
 “ subjects, the Commons in Parliament assembled,

\* Oldmixon’s Hist. of England.

“ being



“ being highly concerned at *the continued endeavours*  
 “ *of the enemies of your person and government to*  
 “ disturb the tranquillity and happiness of your  
 “ kingdoms, and to deprive your people of the  
 “ great blessings they enjoy under your auspicious  
 “ reign; and it having appeared to us, that, by the  
 “ encouragement, and *the false and traiterous insi-*  
 “ *nuations of persons disaffected to your title and govern-*  
 “ *ment,* great numbers of your poor deluded sub-  
 “ jects have been prevailed upon, in many parts  
 “ of the kingdom, *to assemble together, and, in a*  
 “ *tumultuous and rebellious manner, to commit great*  
 “ *disorders, and do great injuries to others of their*  
 “ *fellow-subjects and fellow-protestants,* we think it  
 “ our indispensable duty, on this occasion, to express  
 “ our utmost abhorrence of all such traitorous pro-  
 “ ceedings, and our highest resentment against the  
 “ authors and promoters of them; and to renew  
 “ to your Majesty the hearty and vigorous reso-  
 “ lutions of your faithful Commons to support  
 “ your Majesty and your government against all  
 “ your open and secret enemies, and to contribute  
 “ the utmost in our power to the honour and safety  
 “ of your sacred person, and the quiet and security  
 “ of your government: and to that end, we crave  
 “ leave most humbly to beseech your Majesty,  
 “ that you will be graciously pleased to give direc-  
 “ *tions to the several magistrates throughout your king-*  
 “ *dom, that the laws now in force may be put in a*  
 “ *speedy, and in the most vigorous, execution, against*  
 “ *all such persons as shall be any way concerned in the*  
 “ *rebellious and tumultuous riots and disorders which*  
 “ have

“ have been committed, and are now carrying on, by  
 “ persons disaffected to your Majesty, and your govern-  
 “ ment, and that a strict enquiry may be made to dis-  
 “ cover the authors and promoters of them, so as they  
 “ may be brought to condign punishment.

“ And it being apparent, that the neglect or mis-  
 “ behaviour of many justices of peace, and other ma-  
 “ gistrates, have given great encouragement to the said  
 “ disorders, we crave leave, in all humility, to be-  
 “ seech your Majesty, that an account may be taken of  
 “ such justices of the peace as have failed in the dis-  
 “ charge of their duty on these occasions; and that  
 “ such of them as shall appear to your Majesty to have  
 “ neglected their duty, may be forthwith put out of the  
 “ commissions of the peace, and that such other magis-  
 “ trates, as shall likewise appear to your Majesty to  
 “ have neglected their duty therein, may be proceeded  
 “ against with the utmost rigour of the law.

“ And, as your loyal Commons are fully assured,  
 “ that by the wisdom and steadiness of your admi-  
 “ nistration, the sceptre in your royal hand will soon  
 “ become a terror to all those, who by open or secret  
 “ practices shall any way abet the enemies of your  
 “ person or government; so, from our most dutiful  
 “ regard to your Majesty, and in justice to those of  
 “ your subjects, who for their zeal and firm adherence  
 “ to your Majesty and your government have been  
 “ sufferers in the said tumultuous and traitorous  
 “ disorders, we do most humbly beseech your  
 “ Majesty, that you will be most graciously pleas-  
 “ ed to give directions, that an exact account may  
 “ be taken of the losses and damages which any of  
 “ your



“ your subjects have sustained by reason of the said  
 “ tumultuous and rebellious proceedings, and that the  
 “ sufferers may have full compensation made them for  
 “ their damages; your faithful Commons most  
 “ humbly assuring your Majesty, that all expences  
 “ which shall be incurred on that account shall  
 “ be made good to your Majesty out of the next  
 “ aids that shall be afterwards granted by parlia-  
 “ ment.

“ And for the security of your sacred person,  
 “ and the quieting the minds of your faithful sub-  
 “ jects, we do further most humbly advise your  
 “ Majesty, that you will be graciously pleased to  
 “ give orders that the magistrates throughout the  
 “ kingdom, in their several stations, do speedily  
 “ and effectually put the laws in execution against  
 “ the papist and non-jurors \*.”

The address was presented on the 19th of July,  
 and in his answer the King said: “ *I will give*  
 “ *immediate directions for putting in execution the*  
 “ *several matters which you so justly recommend to*  
 “ *me †.*”

On the 16th of August, 1715, an address was  
 presented to his Majesty by Mr. Nathaniel Hodges,  
 and the Protestant dissenting Ministers of all the  
*denominations*, introduced by his Grace the Duke of  
 Newcastle, wherein they say,

“ We, your Majesty’s most loyal subjects, think  
 “ ourselves obliged in duty and gratitude humbly

\* Commons Journal, vol. xviii. p. 229.

† Ibid. p. 231.

“ to acknowledge *that seasonable protection which*  
 “ *your Majesty has been pleased to give to those of*  
 “ *our persuasion, from the late rebellious tumults, and*  
 “ *for the gracious answer to the address of your*  
 “ *faithful Commons, wherein they desire, that a full*  
 “ *compensation be made to those whose sufferings they*  
 “ *so justly impute to their zeal and firm adherence to*  
 “ *your Majesty and your government.*

“ We can assure your Majesty, that no just  
 “ occasion has been given by us to our fellow-sub-  
 “ jects for any such treatment ; nor can the prin-  
 “ ciples which oblige us to dissent from the Church  
 “ of England be a reasonable provocation to any  
 “ who have the least regard to the common rights  
 “ of mankind, or the rules of the Christian re-  
 “ ligion.

“ We desire nothing more than to enjoy our  
 “ civil rights, with a full liberty to profess our  
 “ own religious sentiments, which we take to be a  
 “ privilege due to all men. *We have been always*  
 “ *ready to assist the Church of England in defence of*  
 “ *the Protestant religion, when in real and imminent*  
 “ *danger, being agreed with them and all Protef-*  
 “ *tant churches in those principles that began the*  
 “ *reformation, and which alone can justify and*  
 “ *support it.*

“ When there has been a design to introduce  
 “ popery and arbitrary power, the Protestant Dis-  
 “ senters have generally been first attacked, nor  
 “ know we any other reason why we have now  
 “ suffered the outrage of papists, non-jurors, and  
 “ other disaffected persons, but that *they were*  
 “ *sure*

“ *sure we were a body of men fixed in our duty to*  
 “ *your Majesty, and lay most exposed to popular in-*  
 “ *sults, against which your Majesty and your two*  
 “ *Houses of Parliament, in your great wisdom and*  
 “ *goodness, has given us a seasonable, and we*  
 “ *hope effectual, security, for time to come, &c.*”

His Majesty's most gracious answer.

“ *I am very much concerned at the unchristian and*  
 “ *barbarous treatment, which those of your persua-*  
 “ *sion have met with in several parts of my kingdom,*  
 “ *and care shall be taken that a full compensation*  
 “ *be made to them for their sufferings. I thank you*  
 “ *for this dutiful and loyal address, and you may*  
 “ *be assured of my protection.*”

A short time afterwards, (4th March, 1717) Dr. Calamy, introduced by Mr. Secretary Stanhope, presented to his Majesty another address of the dissenting Ministers, in which was this passage. “ We  
 “ think it the particular honour of the Protestant  
 “ Dissenters, that *their strict adherence to the interest*  
 “ *of your illustrious family, before your Majesty's ac-*  
 “ *cession, and their loyalty to it since, have drawn upon*  
 “ *them so much of the fury of their fellow subjects ; we*  
 “ *are not conscious what else could render us ob-*  
 “ *noxious to them. Our principles being, as we*  
 “ *hope, the most friendly to mankind, and amount-*  
 “ *ing to no more than those of a general toleration to*  
 “ *all peaceable subjects, universal love and charity for all*  
 “ *Christians, and to act always in matters of religion as*  
 “ *God shall give us light into his will about them.*

“ We do not so much as expect or desire any  
 “ thing that ought to give any one the least dis-  
 “ turbance, we only wish, that under your Majesty,

“ *as*

“ *as the common father of all your loyal people, those of our persuasion might not want capacity, as we hope your Majesty will find they never want an inclination, to promote the true interest of the Protestant religion, and of their country.*”

That inclination was not wanting in the Dissenters of Birmingham, in the year 1745. While High Churchmen were fostering a rebellion against their sovereign, and plotting the destruction of their country, these Dissenters were embodied in defence of both. They formed themselves into a volunteer company, and were daily exercised to the use of arms. Their example repressed the disaffected, and contributed much towards preventing this part of the kingdom from rising in favour of the Pretender.

When the High Church party had resolved to take into their own hands the late opposition to the repeal of the Test laws, the county of Warwick was found to retain its ancient principles and spirit. The clergy of Birmingham prevailed, without difficulty, upon the descendants of those who had fostered the doctrines, and complimented the person, of Sacheverell, to give their signatures for calling a meeting of the freeholders of that county. The earl of Aylesford, captain of the yeomen of his Majesty's guard, presided at the meeting, and dignified with his name a string of resolutions, in which the clergy had artfully concealed, in language of much apparent moderation, the most intolerant and arbitrary principles.

The town of Birmingham itself, probably owing to its ancient connection with Sacheverell, had long been distinguished for the narrow spirit of its priests,  
and

and the religious bigotry of its inhabitants. When Dr. Priestley accepted the pastoral charge in a congregation of Protestant Dissenters there, and came to reside in its neighbourhood, he attempted to bring the Churchmen to a better temper towards the Dissenters, but in vain. Some advances made by the Dissenters towards conciliation had no effect; and Dr. Priestley could procure no return of liberality, either to himself or others. He was personally obnoxious to High Churchmen in general, but particularly to the Clergy of that class, from the attacks he had repeatedly made upon the generally received doctrine of the Trinity, and from his maintaining the impolicy and injustice of establishing any system of religion. His heterodoxy upon these points was construed into a declaration of hostility against the *political* constitution of his country, and he was charged with designing to raise a rebellion among the mechanics of Birmingham, in support of them. These calumnies had the sanction of Dr. Horsley, then Archdeacon of St. Albans, by whom he was held up to the public as a criminal, living deservedly under the constant suspicion and connivance of the magistrate. The following passage is extracted from Dr. Horsley's "Tracts in controversy with Dr. Priestley," republished since he became a bishop. Its curiosity and importance induce me to give it at length.

"He" (i. e. Dr. Priestley) "shews with great  
 "ability, that all measures of government to support  
 "the ecclesiastical constitution will be of no avail, if  
 "once a great majority of the people can be made its

D

"enemies"



“ *enemies*—and for this good purpose he declaims in  
 “ his *conventicle*, to ‘ enlighten the minds and excite  
 “ the zeal’ of the mechanics of the populous town  
 “ of Birmingham, with respect to the doctrines in  
 “ dispute between himself and the assertors of that  
 “ faith which the Church of England holds in com-  
 “ mon with the first Christians. The avowal of  
 “ these sentiments in himself, of *hostility to the po-  
 “ litical constitution* of his country; the attempt  
 “ to excite similar sentiments in the breasts of the  
 “ ‘ commonest people,’ in whose breasts they cannot  
 “ be expected to lie inactive, quietly expecting the  
 “ event of literary discussion, such avowal and  
 “ *such attempts are more, I should think, than can be  
 “ justified by the rights of private judgment upon specu-  
 “ lative questions; not that I would insinuate that they  
 “ in any degree deserve the attention of our governors;*  
 “ for I am well persuaded that neither his doctrine  
 “ nor his principles are gaining that ground among  
 “ the people which he seems to imagine. I am in-  
 “ clined, indeed, to think, that the advancement  
 “ even of his unitarian doctrine is but slow, except  
 “ in his own head, in which it seems to be making  
 “ hasty strides. *In his good wishes to the constitution,*  
 “ I think better of many of his unitarian friends,  
 “ than to believe they concur with him; and while  
 “ trade and manufactures flourish at Birmingham,  
 “ we may safely trust to the inducements which  
 “ every man there will find, to mind his own busi-  
 “ ness, to defeat the success of Dr. Priestley’s en-  
 “ deavours to ‘ enlighten and excite.’ It seems  
 “ therefore *unnecessary at present* to think of ‘ raising  
 “ the dam, or of making it stronger.’ It will be the  
 “ better



“ better policy of government to let the brawling  
 “ torrent pass. The attempt to provoke severities  
 “ by audacious language, in order to raise a cry of  
 “ persecution, if sedition, making religion its pre-  
 “ tence, should meet with a premature check from  
 “ the secular power, is a stale trick, by which the  
 “ world is grown too wise to be taken in. *If Dr.*  
 “ *Priestley ever should attempt to execute the smallest*  
 “ *part of what he would now be understood to threa-*  
 “ *ten,* it may then indeed be expedient that the  
 “ magistrate should shew, that he beareth not the  
 “ sword in vain. But *whatever Dr. Priestley may*  
 “ *affect to think of the intolerance of Churchmen in*  
 “ *general, and of the Archdeacon of St. Alban’s in*  
 “ *particular, a Churchman lives not in the present*  
 “ *age so weak, who would not in policy, if not in*  
 “ *love, discourage, rather than promote, any thing*  
 “ *that might be called a persecution of the unitarian*  
 “ *blasphemy, in the person of Dr. Priestley, or any*  
 “ *of his admirers.* A Churchman lives not, so  
 “ weak as not to know, that persecution is the hot-  
 “ bed in which nonsense and impiety have ever  
 “ thrived; it is so friendly to the growth of religion,  
 “ that it nourishes even the noxious weeds, which  
 “ carry but a resemblance of the true plant in  
 “ the external form. Let us trust, therefore, *for the*  
 “ *present,* as we securely may, to the trade of the  
 “ good town of Birmingham, *and to the wise con-*  
 “ *nivance of the magistrate, (who watches, no doubt,*  
 “ *while he deems it politic to wink) to nip Dr. Priest-*  
 “ *ley’s goodly projects in the bud,* which nothing  
 “ would be so likely to ripen to a dangerous  
 “ effect, as constraint *excessively or unseasonably* used.

*" Thanks however are due to him from all lovers of  
 " their country, for the mischief which he wants not  
 " the inclination to do, if he could find the means of  
 " doing it. In gratitude's estimation the will is ever  
 " to be taken for the deed \*."*

It seems the Bishop did not know the spirit of his friends. Churchmen have belied the Bishop's prediction; they have been weak enough to prepare the hotbed of persecution, and Dr. Priestley's plants may now be expected to advance with luxuriant growth.

While the repeal of the Test Laws was in agitation, Birmingham became the seat of local disputation, and Dr. Priestley was attacked with fury both in sermons and pamphlets. Having been marked out by bishops as the worst of criminals, and the most desperate of sinners, it was not to be expected that he would be treated with much ceremony by the inferior clergy. Accordingly he was charged with attacking the basis of moral obligation, and with forming designs to overturn by violence the constitution of his country; to believe his clerical adversaries, he was not only a blasphemer of his God, but a traitor to his king. By such misrepresentations, the first philosopher of the age, upon whose moral character his most virulent enemies could not fix a stain, and whom any country in Europe would be proud to call her own, could not walk the streets without danger of personal insult. The calumnies of the clergy were extended to the Dissenters in general, and the grossest false-

\* Bishop Horsley's Tracts, p. 404, &c.

hoods and misrepresentations circulated to render their whole body suspected and odious. Their loyalty was disputed, and Mr. Madan, in a sermon preached in the parish church of St. Philip's, asserted boldly, and falsely too, if history is to be credited, "that the *Presbyterian* principles are unquestionably *republican*\*." He afterwards explained the word "*Presbyterian*" to be here used as a general term opposed to the members of the Church of England; but his hearers, it will appear presently, took it in its literal signification. The lower classes of the people, by these unworthy arts, were worked up to a high pitch of fury, and hearing that some of their superiors indulged themselves in the prac-

\* In the debate for uniting his Majesty's subjects in 1667, Sir Robert Cotton conceiving, as it may be presumed Mr. Madan does now, that kingly governments have a divine origin, said, "The Presbyterian tenets are most destructive to our government"—"that the king is but *minister bonorum*"—"he is greater than any one man, but less than the people"—"*salus populi suprema lex,*" and many others."—Grey's Debates, vol. i. p. 113. Mr. Madan would be puzzled to shew how these principles differ from those on which the revolution must be defended.

The apostle "Paul had opened some men's eyes, and the loaves began to come in but slowly. This enraged the *craftsmen*, and they enraged the people: The priests lost customers, and the people lost their senses. Such is the power of delusion over dark and slavish minds! *Let but the priest point at a windmill, and cry the Church is falling, his congregation will venture their brains to stop the sails.* What a rare army does zeal raise, when religion and reason do not spoil the muster, or stop the march."—The Craftsmen, a Sermon, or Paraphrase upon several verses of the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, first published in the Independent Whig, and republished in 1791, p. 26.

tice of drinking "Damnation to the Presbyterians," were prepared to commit every species of violence and outrage against them.

Notice was given by public advertisement, that on Thursday, the 14th of July, there would be a dinner at the hotel, to celebrate the anniversary of the French revolution. The invitation was addressed equally to Churchmen and Dissenters, and contained nothing that could reasonably offend either; but the High Church party did not fail to use this meeting as a pretext for inflaming the passions of the people more highly against the Dissenters. The most absurd and ridiculous reports were not only circulated, but believed; and the High Church partizans endeavoured to delude the people into a firm persuasion, that the Dissenters had formed a regular plan for *rising in rebellion* against their sovereign, *and pulling down the churches*, on an appointed day.

On the Monday preceding the 14th of July, some copies of a printed hand-bill, of an inflammatory nature, inviting every enemy to civil and religious despotism, "to give his sanction to the "majestic common cause," by a public celebration of the anniversary, were found on the table of a coffee-house. This handbill has been supposed by some to have been the production of the High Church party, and to have been placed there on purpose to make the storm fall more heavy on the Dissenters. It certainly contained sentiments of

disloyalty

disloyalty which do not belong to them; and as several letters in the same strain were afterwards *forged* by High Churchmen, in order to enrage the mob, suspicions have been entertained, not without reason, that this was fabricated by the same persons: The circulation of this paper in the town of Birmingham, by whomsoever fabricated, was at first bounded by the walls of the coffee-house, and the number of copies left there did not exceed half a dozen in number. The terms in which it was couched, though utterly indefensible, were not more likely, either from the matter or the composition, to excite a breach of the peace, or endanger the government, than publications which daily swarm from the press with impunity. But in that ferment of party, the magistrates thought it necessary to be vigilant and active, and immediately transmitted one of these handbills to the office of the Secretary of State.

The measures taken by the magistrates for the suppression of these papers naturally made them the general subject of conversation, and occasioned manuscript copies to be taken, and circulated into many hands. As the day approached, no artifices were spared to work upon the passions of the lower classes of people, and additional calumnies were invented and spread abroad. In vain did the gentlemen, who had proposed the commemoration, declare, by advertisement in the Birmingham Chronicle, their entire disapprobation of the obnoxious handbill, and their ignorance of the author. In vain did they “ aver, in the most explicit manner,



“ their firm attachment to the constitution of their  
 “ own country, as vested in the three estates of  
 “ King, Lords, and Commons.” The principles  
 of the Dissenters continued still to be wilfully mis-  
 represented, and no doubt was entertained among  
 the bigotted sons of the Church, that the object of  
 the meeting (at which Churchmen as well as Dis-  
 senters were to assemble) was to carry into exe-  
 cution a plot against the civil constitution and  
 established religion of their country.

The morning of the 14th was ushered in by an  
 advertisement from the magistrates (dated the day  
 before) offering a reward of one hundred guineas  
 for discovery of the writer, printer, publisher, or  
 distributor of the beforementioned handbill. Why  
 this advertisement was delayed from Monday till  
 Thursday does not appear; but the publication of  
 it *on that morning* had, I will in charity hope, an  
*unexpected*, but certainly a *most powerful* effect on the  
 minds of the populace; it added the *stimulus* of  
 terror to religious zeal, and gave, as they were  
 wickedly taught to believe, the sanction of autho-  
 rity to their suspicions. The friends to the com-  
 memoration, sensible of the pains that had been  
 taken to provoke a riot, agreed among themselves,  
 for preservation of the public peace, to give up  
 their design; the dinner was accordingly counter-  
 manded, and a handbill drawn up, and sent to  
 the printer. Upon further consideration, it was de-  
 termined that the handbill should be suppressed, and  
 the dinner take place; but that to avoid all pretence  
 of provocation on their part, the company should  
 break up at an early hour.



The rabble before the door of the hotel insulted some of the gentlemen going in, and shewed a disposition to begin a riot; but their numbers were not sufficient to create alarm. About three o'clock, eighty-one gentlemen (Churchmen and Dissenters) sat down to dinner. A member of the establishment presided at the meeting. Every thing *within doors* passed off with the utmost harmony, and between five and six o'clock they broke up. The toasts are before the public, and bear no particular reference to the Protestant Dissenters, but to the cause of liberty in general; and Mr. Russell, who was present, in his letter of the 20th July, 1791, says, "Nor was a single sentiment uttered, or I believe conceived, that would hurt the feelings of any one friend to liberty and good government, under *the happy constitution we are blessed with in this kingdom.*" The company, thus dispersed, congratulated themselves, in a momentary delusion, that the day would conclude in tranquillity. But a few hours introduced a different scene, and proved that they were as little acquainted with the savage temper of religious bigots, when they supposed they could relent, and recede from a design to persecute; as those bigots were acquainted with the firm and resolute spirit of the Dissenters, when they could hope to subdue it by violence.

On the 14th of July, the High Church party met in great numbers at several of the taverns and public-houses, not to celebrate the French revolution, but to drink "Damnation to the Presbyterians." The early breaking up of the gentlemen, who had met in honour of the French revolution, seem

at first to have disconcerted the High Church plan for beginning a riot; for at their departure from the hotel there was no appearance of tumult. But about eight o'clock, a band of ruffians, inflamed with liquor and religious zeal, appeared before the hotel. They broke the windows, and with difficulty were convinced that the company had retired. Their behaviour at the outset plainly shewed, that the celebration of the anniversary had been artfully made a cloak for setting on foot a crusade against the Dissenters; for not one hostile voice against the French revolution was heard, while from all sides were echoed, " Church and King for ever; Down with the Presbyterians," &c. and from some persons, " Damn Dr. Priestley." Disappointed in their design to commit personal violence, and add to the catalogue of martyrs, the deluded multitude, taught by their pastors that the *Presbyterians* were republicans, and traitors to their King, rushed tumultuously to the new Meeting-house, additionally obnoxious because Dr. Priestley preached there, and set it on fire; they then proceeded to the old Meeting-house, which they levelled with the ground.

While thus meritoriously displaying their loyalty and religion, they declared their intention to proceed next to Dr. Priestley's house at Fairhill\* (about

two

\* " From this you may learn, my friends, that one man with truth on his side is enough to frighten a whole army, yea, a whole hierarchy of *craftsmen*, and to defeat them, if he has but a fair hearing. You see also the graceless method that red hot high priests take to confute such a man: first, they dress him up as an *atheist*, and an enemy to the Church, and then set the mob upon him; for the law was not against Paul,

" 28

two miles from the town). Notice was immediately conveyed to him of the humane design of these reformers, and he provided for his safety by flight. He had not dined at the hotel, and nothing could be more unexpected than this intelligence. The mob kept their word, and remained during the whole night at Fairhill, drinking his liquors, destroying, and at last burning to the ground, his house and laboratory. In the flames which here gratified the bigotry of High Churchmen, were consumed the most valuable apparatus for philosophical experiments that any private individual was ever possessed of, many manuscripts intended for publication, and a library of valuable books, the produce of many years selection. Not yet satiated with mischief, these savages returned from Dr. Priestley's, crying through the streets "Church and King;" and the inhabitants were obliged to chalk those words on the fronts and doors of their houses, to protect them. The mob continued their depredations on the houses and property of

" as we shall see presently, and yet *they meant to destroy Paul*  
 " *against law*. An implacable tribe! no power can satisfy  
 " them, that has either mercy in it, or bounds to it; craft is  
 " their calling, and lies and violence the tools of their trade."

" Behold here the different behaviour of truth and falsehood!  
 " or, in other words, of Paul and the craftsmen! When men  
 " contend for truth they do it calmly, because they are sure that it  
 " will support itself; but error, conscious of its weak foundation,  
 " flies instantly for support to rage and oppression. Paul reasons  
 " peaceably and powerfully: Demetrius deceives, scolds, and  
 " *raises a mob: but I defy the craftsmen to shew me one mob of*  
 " *Paul's raising in all the New Testament.*" The Craftsmen,  
 p. 29, 28.

Dissenters (chiefly Presbyterians\*), for the remainder of Friday, the whole of Saturday, and until late on Sunday evening when a detachment of the 15th regiment of dragoons arrived from Nottingham after a forced march of no less than fifty-six miles in one day.

It certainly is extraordinary, that in the heart of this country, boasting of its civilization and good government, such disgraceful outrages should have been permitted, without interruption from the civil power, for three nights and three days together. To suppose that the persons and property of Dissenters are not equally under the protection of the civil magistrate, with those of the members of the established Church, would be a libel upon our laws; to suppose that the executive power is in general not sufficiently strong to afford that protection, would be a libel on the government itself. By some strange occurrence of circumstances, however, the executive power appeared insufficient for a time to check this paroxysm of intemperate zeal. High Churchmen, indeed, could never have chosen a more favourable moment. The attention of the King's Ministers had been occupied with providing for the safety of the metropolis, where a similar meeting had been advertised. And, while troops were marching there from all parts, Birmingham was

\* A Presbyterian Meeting-house, situate at Kingswood, which was now destroyed, had been demolished by a High Church mob in the tumults of 1715; and from the name of a poor wretch executed for being concerned in pulling it down, had been ever afterwards known by the name of *Dallix's* chapel.  
left

left without any military protection. The watchful care of the magistrates, in sending to the Secretary of State a copy of the inflammatory handbill on the Monday preceding, and the alarming account of the ferment of the public mind which must have accompanied it, occasioned no alteration, and troops were not posted nearer than at fifty-six miles distance. To obtain their aid in case of emergency too, a previous application was requisite to the Secretary at War, and thus nearly three days time must be lost, *even after the rioters had proceeded to such lengths as to render the interference of the military necessary.*

The magistrates dined close to the hotel, and remained in Birmingham till a late hour in the evening; they must therefore have had early intelligence of the commencement of the riots; but it does not appear that they ever read the proclamation in the Riot Act, or, till a very late period, sent for troops to disperse them\*. Such was the general delusion of the rioters, that they were often heard to say, they acted under the protection of the magistrates; and before the soldiers arrived, they spoke with confidence of their being sent by government to assist in the work of devastation. How deserving of pity the infatuation of these poor wretches, who had been taught that they could best testify their attachment to their Sove-

\* The troops are supposed to have arrived at last in consequence of the letter of a private individual, written to Lord Hawkesbury *on Friday*. When the magistrates sent to the Secretary of State is not known.



reign by breaking his laws, and their reverence for their God by persecuting his creatures.

Some have not scrupled to assert, that the outrages of these banditti were the result of a plan regularly arranged and settled before the 14th of July, and that there were persons sent down from London to direct its execution. This is certain, that there were among the rioters some, who appeared to be strangers in Birmingham, to whose orders the utmost deference was paid; and that they proceeded to the destruction of the houses in regular succession, according to a written list, in which was noted the order in which each was to be attacked. The number of houses in this proscription roll was continually increasing, so that at last it was said they amounted to more than seventy. Their ravages were conducted with so much circumspection, that there was a great appearance of method in their madness, and in particular they were careful not to make use of fire where any buildings adjoining to those they were about to destroy might be endangered.

That the Dissenters, and not the friends of the French revolution, were the objects of their fury, is manifest from this circumstance, among others, that the chairman of the meeting, who was a Churchman, escaped without injury; while the houses of Mr. Taylor and Mr. Ryland, who were absent, and known not to approve of it, were burnt to the ground—but they were Dissenters,



and, High Churchmen can feel *envy* as well as  
 “ hatred, and all uncharitableness.”

Several incidents unfortunately occurred to give confidence to the rioters. On the Saturday, after they had for nearly three days triumphed in their excesses, Mr. Brooke, a deputy sheriff for the county of Warwick, published the following animated, pathetic, and liberal handbill.

*Temple Row, Birmingham, Saturday, July 16th, 1791.*

Whereas some detestable villains, from the most wicked motives, to injure Mr. WM. WINDSOR, a tenant of Mr. BROOKE's, at *Ashsted*, have circulated a report that Mr. WINDSOR's buildings at *Ashsted* belong to the *corporation of Coventry*. As such report is evidently intended to incense the *friends* of CHURCH and KING to *destroy* the property of the said WM. WINDSOR, Mr. BROOKE, whose most hearty attachment is *well known* to the *real friends* of CHURCH and KING, begs leave to address them with the most solemn *assurance*, upon the *word* and *honour* of a CHURCH and KING's man, that the *corporation of Coventry*, nor any *Presbyterian*, have any concern or interest whatever in the *buildings* and property of the said WM. WINDSOR, at *Ashsted*, nor in any of the *buildings* belonging to Mr. BROOKE, or any other person, at *Ashsted*; and that upon all elections for the city of Coventry, where the said WM. WINDSOR lived before he came to *Ashsted*, he uniformly voted *against* the *corporation* and *presbyterian interest*, and always supported the REAL TRUE BLUE, which is the CHURCH and KING party.

Mr.

Mr. Brooke, therefore, is convinced that this ADDRESS will be attended to by the GENTLEMEN in the CHURCH and KING party, and hereby offers a reward of Ten Guineas for the detection of the *rascals* who gave rise to so false a report.

*Church and King for ever.*

Proud of the honour of being addressed at such a juncture as “ friends of Church and King,” and “ GENTLEMEN of the Church and King party; and flattered with Mr. Brooke’s declaring himself “ also a Church and King’s man,” they spared Mr. Windfor’s property—But did such attempt to conciliate a gang of thieves and house-burners, tend to the restoration of the public tranquillity, or the safety of individuals?

On the following day, another extraordinary hand-bill appeared, which, however well designed, certainly tended rather to incite than abate the evil spirit then working. No less than sixteen gentlemen, headed by the Earl of Aylesford, including those magistrates whose immediate duty it was to quell these tumults, and those clergymen whose ministrations ought to have inspired a more christian temper in the authors of them, addressed these rebels against the government of their country, by the tender appellation of “ Friends and *Fellow Churchmen.*” Instead of raising the *posse comitatus*, and seizing these offenders; instead of crushing them by an armed force in case of resistance; instead of reading the proclamation in the Riot Act, and putting them out of the protection of the law; nay,  
without

without even reprobating their past misconduct, or threatening them with the punishment due for the crimes they had already committed, they were *informed* that the damage done would fall upon the county at large, and conjured to desist from “ the destruction of *any more* houses,” on account of the consequent addition of taxes, which they, “ and the rest of the friends of the Church,” would feel a very grievous burden ! If a similar address, not to “ the *gentlemen* of the Church and King “ party,” but to any other *gentlemen* thieves or felons had been proposed, is it probable that the signature of an earl, and a knight of the shire, of justices of the peace and clergymen, would have been obtained ?

During the melancholy scenes exhibited in the successive conflagration and destruction of houses, High Churchmen were guilty of the most nefarious practices to stimulate the mob to further acts of mischief. Letters were forged, charging the Dissenters with a treasonable design to overthrow the present happy constitution of this kingdom, and pretending that the whole body of them were combined together, and had appointed to rise on the 16th of August, “ *to burn the churches, blow up the parliament, cut off the head of the king, and abolish all taxes.*” These letters were pretended to be found among the papers of Dr. Priestley and Mr. Russell, and two of them were brought and read to the rioters by two persons on horseback at Showell Green, the house of Mr. Russell, while it was in flames. It is impossible for an honest heart not to feel indignation against men who could be

guilty of such aggravated wickedness. The mob, by such artifices, were inflamed to an inconceivable pitch of fury, and the ruins of Mr. Taylor's house at Mosley Hall (which some of them had determined to spare) are an awful monument of the powerful effect of these incentives.

At length tranquillity was restored; and government determined to take the prosecution of these offenders into their own hands. The High Church party, who had originally fostered the spirit of religious intolerance, and now contemplated with pleasure the smoking monuments of its triumph, gave no assistance towards the discovery of the instigators or perpetrators of these horrid deeds. Witnesses were dragged with difficulty, and at the hazard of every species of personal insult, to give information before the magistrates; and when at last some of the rioters were brought to trial at the assizes, the reluctance of the juries to convict, even on the clearest evidence, shewed how fatally and extensively the prejudices of High Churchmen had been disseminated through the county. Attempts were made to pollute the administration of justice, and witnesses were tampered with and intimidated in open court; but against four unfortunate wretches the charges were so clearly proved, that even juries, summoned chiefly from Birmingham and its neighbourhood, pronounced them guilty of capital offences. Two of them, being men of infamous characters in other respects, have been executed, but the others have been pardoned. By whose interference, and through what interest these offenders have been so indulgently dealt with, is not exactly

exactly known, but there is reason to believe that the life of one of them has been spared through the *mistake* of the persons, who took a subsequent extrajudicial examination of *one* of the witnesses produced at the trial.

The vindictive spirit of the High Church party was hardly more strongly marked by their rejoicings during the commission of these disgraceful outrages, than by their subsequent conduct. They have shewn no desire to alleviate the misfortunes of their neighbours; with them calamity has no claim to pity, nor adversity to consolation, and a difference in religious opinion cancels all the claims of humanity. "The Friends and Fellow-Churchmen" of the rectors of the parishes in Birmingham had destroyed the meeting-houses of the Dissenters, and it would not have been a breach of christian charity, if they had repaired that inconvenience by the loan of their churches. At Banbury, the Dissenters do not conceive their meeting-house to be profaned, because churchmen put up their prayers in it; nor at Belfast does the rector find his church \* contaminated because the Dissenters are permitted to worship God there. We have seen a minister of religion, of exemplary purity of life, whose labours in his pastoral office had been *particularly* grateful to his people; a philosopher, whose fame had ex-

\* In June 1716, Mr. Gibbon was suspended by his diocesan (Bishop Atterbury) for lending his church at Gravesend to the Dutch soldiers, returning from Scotland to embark for Holland, for performing divine service, *a favour which they represented to him they had never been denied during their march*; but he was soon afterwards restored.



tended far beyond the narrow confines of this island, driven from his family and friends, and made a wanderer on the face of the earth by the wild fanaticism of religious bigots, and his townsmen rejoicing in his misfortunes. The houses of Dissenters had been destroyed, and their property wasted by lawless violence, through, as they conceived, the want of a spirited and early exertion of the civil power; yet while those houses were lying in ruins, the liberal inhabitants of Birmingham insulted the sufferers by calling a town's meeting, (on August the 12th, 1791) at which they returned their thanks to those magistrates "for the solicitude  
 " they exhibited on *the first intimation* given them  
 " of disturbances *likely to take place* in this town on  
 " the 14th of July, and for their extraordinary vigilance and unwearied personal attention on that  
 " and every subsequent day till public tranquillity  
 " was happily restored;" and also to each of those gentlemen, "a handsome piece of plate, as a  
 " grateful acknowledgement of *their eminent services*, repeatedly experienced by this town and  
 " neighbourhood, *and especially during the late riots*;  
 " and that the chairman be desired to procure and  
 " present the same to them." By these resolutions it appears, that before the 14th of July, the magistrates were prepared *to expect* disturbances, and in some way or other exhibited solicitude upon the occasion. The Dissenters have to lament that the arrangements made *to prevent these riots* should have so totally failed, and that the *eminent services* of these magistrates towards putting a stop to them should have been so entirely unsuccessful.

If



If Mr. Madan or Mr. Curtis had been obliged to fly instead of Dr. Priestley, and the houses of the principal Churchmen, instead of the principal Dissenters, had presented the dismal spectacle then exhibited, it may be fairly asked, would such a town's meeting have been called, or such resolutions passed? When, with better reason, the High Bailiff, Clergy, and other principal inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Birmingham, presented an address of thanks to his Majesty, for his paternal care in sending the military to suppress the riots, it was couched in such terms, that no Dissenter, or other person who acknowledged fallibility in man, could sign it\*. High Churchmen are still in the daily habit of calumniating the Dissenters in anonymous papers circulated through the town of Birmingham, and endeavouring to keep up the rancorous spirit, as yet but very imperfectly subdued, by threatening them with fresh outrages. It will hardly be credited, that a subscription has been made to defray the expences of defending those "Gentlemen" of the Church and King party, who were tried for their lives as felons at Warwick, or that the clergy have again exasperated their hearers, by fresh philippics from their pulpits.

\* It contains this paragraph, "We cannot neglect this occasion of pledging ourselves to support your Majesty's illustrious house, and to defend that happy constitution both in Church and State, *against every attempt at innovation*, at the risk of every thing dear to us."

The Committee who prepared this address, consisted of the Rev. Mr. Curtis, the Rev. Mr. Price, the Rev. Mr. Young, the Rev. Mr. James, the Rev. Mr. Burn, Dr. Gilby, Dr. Pearson, Mr. Peter Capper, Mr. Theodore Price, Mr. John Brooke, and Mr. William Wallis Mason.

The consequence has been such as might be expected; the spirit of the High Church party is becoming daily more virulent, and, but for the military force stationed at Birmingham, fresh outrages might be justly dreaded. The friends of Dr. Priestley, anxious for his personal safety, have been obliged to request he will not, for the present, venture among them, and his congregation have reluctantly given up their faithful and beloved pastor. And not to Birmingham only is this evil spirit confined, as may be seen in the following account of a late transaction in another part of the county.

At Warwick, in the Sunday Schools belonging to the Church, it was made a rule that the children of *parishioners only* should be admitted. The Dissenters opened a school for the benefit of such poor children in the town and neighbourhood as did not come within the description. The flourishing state of the Dissenting Sunday School at first obtained the entire approbation, but afterwards excited the jealousy, of the vicar of St. Nicholas. He avowed an intention to use all "*fair and honourable*" means to induce the children to leave it, yet afterwards threatened to deprive one person of the *bread*, another of the *coals*, provided at the public expence, unless they withdrew their children from the Dissenting School; and another was reminded, that the steward of a certain noble lord could "deprive him of his bread." At length, ungenerously intending to take advantage of the unfortunate disturbances of Birmingham, which the Dissenters of Warwick, who are intimately connected with those at Birmingham, could not be supposed to view  
without

without concern, the High Church party determined to make short work of it, and require at once that the doors of the Dissenting School should be shut up. The Dissenters, in order to put a stop to further dispute, proposed that two persons on the part of the Church of England, and two persons on their part, should be appointed to make enquiries into the wishes of the parents of the children belonging to their school, and that none should be allowed to continue whose parents did not *expressly desire* it, but that the children of such as did *abuse* it, should continue to attend. This proposal was rejected as unsatisfactory, and a meeting of *all* the inhabitants, who were members of the Church of England, called, to confer on the subject of an unfortunate Sunday School, which had thus innocently "*given cause of alarm to the clergy,*" "*and several of the inhabitants of the borough.*" A few of the most violent and bigotted Churchmen accordingly met, a clergyman was placed in the chair, witnesses were examined before this mock tribunal, and it was *unanimously* agreed, that the conduct of the Dissenters had been improper; and they resolved, that they "*think it their duty to*" "*unite, and will heartily concur in every legal and*" "*honourable measure to resist such attempts, and*" "*to support the excellent constitution of this country*" "*in church and state;*" and a committee was appointed "*to consider and determine upon a plan*" "*for supporting the established Church in this borough.*" Great events have sometimes arisen from little causes, and the wise heads of Warwick foresee the destruction of the present system of government, from the prosperity of a Dissenting Sunday School! Their

conduct, if one could conceive them to be in earnest, has been in the highest degree absurd, but it may possibly deserve a much harsher epithet. High Churchmen have ever looked with a jealous eye to the schools of the Dissenters. By the Act of Uniformity, none could be kept but by masters licenced by the bishop; but by the Toleration Act, dissenting schoolmasters qualifying as therein required were exempted from penalties. By the Schism Act \*, they were again deprived of this exemption, except that by the grace and favour of High Churchmen they were permitted “to instruct youth in reading, writing, arithmetic, or any part of mathematical learning relating to navigation, or any mechanical art only, so as such reading, writing,” &c. “should be taught in the *English tongue* †.” That act was to have taken place on the very day Queen Anne died, and one of the first acts passed after the accession of the Hanover family repealed it. In 1779, the restrictions imposed on dissenting ministers and schoolmasters by the Toleration Act were somewhat relaxed; and in 1791, the churchmen of Warwick appoint a committee to deprive them of the privileges granted by the legislature!

In Aris’s Birmingham Gazette of Monday, Oct. 24, 1791, appeared the following extraordinary letters:

\* In the progress of this bill in the House of Commons, it was resolved, that it should be made to extend to the Dissenters of Ireland, and yet another clause, extending the Toleration Act to that country was negatived.

† See Chandler’s Debates of the Commons, vol. v. p. 140, where will be found a copy of the bill.

" *To the Printer of Aris's Birmingham Gazette.*

" MR. PEARSON,

" HAVING received an anonymous letter, of  
 " which the following is an exact copy, and which  
 " appears to come from a real friend to truth and  
 " the establishment, I should be exceedingly ready  
 " to satisfy both him, and the public, *that the mem-*  
 " *bers of the establishment, clergy and laity, were so far*  
 " *from raising or encouraging the late riots, that they*  
 " *instantly took every means in their power to suppress*  
 " *them*; but as I do not think it becoming to give  
 " any particular answer to an anonymous letter, I  
 " shall request you to publish this, and thereby in-  
 " form the writer of the letter, *that if he will favour*  
 " *me with his name, I will lay before the public such*  
 " *facts as I flatter myself will fully convince them that*  
 " *the members of the establishment were by no means*  
 " *the occasion of the late riots in this place and neigh-*  
 " *bourhood.*

" I am, Sir,

" Your's, &c.

" W. VILLERS."

" Birmingham, Oct. 17, 1791."

" (C O P Y.)

" To MR. VILLERS,

" High Bailiff,

" Birmingham.

" London, October 13, 1791.

" S I R,

" THE Birmingham paper is a proof of the  
 " attention you shew to the interests of the town,  
 " therefore



“ therefore a stranger without apology addresses  
 “ you. *Dr. Priestley’s letter insinuates the late troubles*  
 “ *were raised by the establishment against him and the*  
 “ *Dissenters.* It is presumed those who know the  
 “ town well know to the contrary; but it is a truth,  
 “ *the Dissenters in distant counties speak with much*  
 “ *acrimony on the same subject.* Surely a calm and  
 “ dispassionate answer might be given: — justice and  
 “ the credit of the town call for it. I am,

“ S I R,

“ A Well Wisher to the Town.”

One can hardly conceive that Mr. Villers was  
 the author of the paper thus bearing his signature.  
 But if he was, let him not stand upon the ceremony of  
 requiring the name of his correspondent; for the honour of  
 his Church, for the sake of religion in general, let me conjure  
 him, if he can, to wipe off the foul imputations that have  
 been cast upon the clergy and laity of the establishment at  
 Birmingham. When Mr. Villers shall have performed his  
 promise, I will with pleasure acknowledge the truth of  
 Bishop Horsley’s prophecy, concerning Dr. Priestley’s safety  
 from the rage of churchmen, and cancel every word of this  
 publication concerning the late riots, that can be construed  
 to convey the slightest censure on any person included in  
 his vindication. But it requires not deep erudition to  
 discover that he has promised more than he can possibly  
 perform; for if the members of the establishment did not  
 commit the late outrages, by whom



whom were they committed? Did the Dissenters burn their own houses, and did the Earl of Aylesford and his fifteen coadjutors address *them* by the name of *fellow-churchmen*? or were the incendiaries aerial beings, to whom *the imagination of the Dissenters* only have given "a local habitation and a name." Mr. Villers must forget that the dwelling-houses of Dissenters have been pillaged and destroyed, while those of the members of the establishment were not violated; and that dissenting meeting-houses have been demolished, while the churches remained uninjured. He must forget that *some* members of the establishment have already suffered the severest punishment our laws can inflict in expiation of their crimes, and that *more* must probably share their fate.

The religious fanaticism which has thus disgraced Birmingham and the county of Warwick, is but a *symptom* of the general disorder which High Churchmen have insinuated into every part of the kingdom, and into the vitals of government itself. The eruption has discharged itself with volcanic force on one devoted spot, but the mountain is still convulsed, and threatens general destruction. At Manchester, Bristol, and other places, the same spirit discovered itself, but not in sufficient force to do mischief; and the visitation charges of bishops, delivered even while the *Church and King* party were burning the habitations of Dissenters, and assize sermons preached almost before their fires were extinguished, shew that the demon of bigotry is not yet glutted. Graduates from Oxford,

with

with exultation, have renewed their charges of sedition, and insolently reproach the sufferers with being the *sole* cause of their own misfortunes. The public prints, under the influence of government\*, have continued their course of falsehood and misrepresentation; and High Churchmen, glorying in the scandalous excesses of their party, hold up the fate of the Dissenters at Birmingham as a just punishment for all who shall dare to dissent from the established religion of their country, and complain of grievances to its legislature.

The Dissenters of Birmingham have, under trying circumstances, conducted themselves with exemplary moderation. Accused of no crime, and conscious of no delinquency, they trust that government is not unmindful of their situation, and will provide for their protection. But they, and the Dissenters in general, must observe with regret the strong impression made by the misrepresentations of their enemies, and deprecate the rising spirit of persecution. Upon former occasions, when the meeting-houses of Dissenters were destroyed, and their property wasted†, by Jacobites and High

\* According to Mr. Burke these prints speak the sentiments of our governors, since they have not disclaimed the paragraphs alluded to. See his "Appeal from the New Whigs to the Old," p. 2. note.

† This happened (besides their losses in the two rebellions) at Newcastle under Line in 1702, at London in 1710, at Bristol in 1714, in Staffordshire in 1715, &c.; and the spirit of disloyalty, which was characteristic of the High Church party, was strongly manifested in riots at Oxford in 1716, which were made the subject of inquiry and censure in the House of Lords.

Churchmen, they were treated with every degree of confidence and affection by government, and received compensation for their losses. But if the time shall hereafter come (and no one who speculates on the present situation of parties in this kingdom can be assured it is far distant) when the government of their country shall be not able or not careful to protect them from the violence of High Churchmen, they feel consolation in the reflection that there will be happier countries, and climes more congenial to liberty, ready to receive them ; where they may enjoy, and support by argument, their religious opinions, without being stigmatized as rebels, or traitors ; where they can be secure in their property and persons ; and where they will be excluded by no tests from the common rights of citizens. Such an asylum for the oppressed already presents itself in America ; and in Ireland, Churchmen and Dissenters can live together in the mutual intercourse of friendship. For *their country* they fear much ; they have seen revived, and fostered at court, that party which the friends of liberty have ever regarded with abhorrence, and the princes of the House of Hanover have, from motives of self-preservation, always studiously kept under. To the ears of the true Whigs of England, the jacobitical cry of “ Church and King \*” can

\* I take this cry to have been borrowed from the papists, who, believing that the pope alone had a right delegated to him from God to make kings, very properly put *their church* first. The Jacobites then used it, and with reason ; for they believed that both Church and King had a *jure divino* original, and that,

can afford no pleasure, nor can the triumphs of High Churchmen secure our happy constitution. The plundering of houses, and the destruction of private property, do not tend to preserve the public peace; and the riots at Birmingham afford a bad presage of what may be expected from the revival of the party. Religious animosity invigorates its zeal in politics, while politics are made a mask for persecution. "The Church," as Mr. Fox justly observed, "never interfered in politics, but for mischief," and its history, as a party, is made up of rebellions, proscriptions, tumults, and devastation. How such an evil spirit should have been regularly nurtured for so long a succession of time in so large a part of the clergy and people of England, it shall be now my business to explain: it cannot be unimportant to trace it to its source.

as to the *Lords and Commons*, they were only the trappings of royalty. But there seems to be no natural connection between a Church existing under a *divine* commission, and a King deriving power from *the people*.

## C H A P T E R     I I I.

*Persecution, for Conscience-sake, a Tenet of the Church of England.*

**I**F it should be asserted, that among the clergy of the established Church may be found many advocates for a limited toleration of sectaries, I will most readily admit it. I might cite, as an authority, the Reviewer himself, who tells us, that “ the notion of persecuting men for their opinions “ is now indeed justly and happily exploded. “ A toleration of *all* the different sects, each “ in its own modes of worship, no less than in its “ doctrines, is also admitted, and become a maxim of government ;” but this is the language of the individual, not of his Church ; and if he wishes us to believe that the persecution of sectaries is not still a tenet of the establishment, he either betrays his own ignorance, or wilfully asserts what he knows to be false.

The constitution of the Church has received no material alteration since its original institution at the reformation. At that period the State having successfully resisted the usurpations of popery, arrogated to itself, as by divine right, the most unjust of them all, the power to regulate, not only the actions,



actions, but the consciences, of men. It declared what should be the creed of its subjects, and made it penal for Englishmen to believe any religious doctrines, but those it had previously sanctioned. The Church was entrusted with the care of men's souls, and declared to be the sacred depository of the true religion, as handed down to a *jure divino* king. It was vested with powers to reform and secure the salvation of those whose belief did not come up to the established standard, by means of spiritual censures; and, where Nonconformists were obstinately determined to go to heaven in their own way, the clergy of this Protestant Church were authorised to call in the aid of the secular power, and extirpate the heresy and heretic together. In the reigns of Henry VIII. of Elizabeth, and James I. the establishment triumphed in persecution, and priests were gratified with the blood of martyrs. In the year 1676, when the *State* began to adopt more moderate maxims, the law was repealed, by which the civil power might be called upon to enforce the sentence of ecclesiastics for the burning of heretics. But neither then, nor at any subsequent time, has *any* alteration been made in the constitution of the *Church*. Its clergy even now boast of its divine origin; it still assumes to itself exclusively within this kingdom, *all truth*; it still may persecute some sectaries as heretics, and punish them for their opinions "by ex-communication, degradation, and other ecclesiastical censures, not extending to death." It is not clear that ecclesiastical judges may not even now *doom* them

them to the flames, though the civil power will not execute the sentence. But the censures just mentioned are not light ones, for the sentence of excommunication (which most affects laymen) is accompanied with disability to be a juryman, or witness, to bring an action in any court of justice ; and, if the party does not submit within forty days, he may be cast into gaol, and imprisoned for life, unless he is *reconciled to the Church*, and finds the security of others for his future obedience, or swears himself \* to obey the commands of the ordinary.

By the statute of the 1st Eliz. c. 1. a boundary was set to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction by the state, and it was enacted, that no tenets should be punished as heretical in the spiritual courts, but those which had been theretofore adjudged to be so by the authority of the canonical scriptures ; by some of the first four general councils, or any other council, if declared in the express and plain words of the said canonical scriptures ; or which should afterwards be so declared by the parliament, with the assent of the clergy in convocation. Thus, as Mr. Justice Blackstone remarks, “ a man continued still

\* This oath is not the same in all the dioceses, and some Dissenters at Swansea, a few years ago, being excommunicated, were under great difficulties, on account of not being able conscientiously to take the oath usually administered in the diocese in which it is situated. It is absurd that the form of *cutting off* nonconformists from a church, to which they never belonged, should be still retained ; and that they should be forced to *make their peace* with a church, to which, according to the Reviewer, they must necessarily be enemies. But there is no absurdity too glaring for bigots in religion to defend.

“ liable to be burnt for what perhaps he did not  
 “ understand to be heresy, till the ecclesiastical  
 “ judge so interpreted the words of the canonical  
 “ scriptures.” And even at this day, whoever, of  
 the sectaries not tolerated, shall dare to interpret the  
 holy scriptures for himself, may be punished by  
 ecclesiastical censures, if an ecclesiastical judge  
 should decree such interpretation to be erroneous.

The Act of Toleration was another interference  
 of the state to check the power of ecclesiastics,  
 but without altering the constitution of the Church.  
 Laymen had before declared what should be deemed  
 heresy in the spiritual courts, they now exempted  
*some descriptions* of Dissenters wholly from their juris-  
 diction, while all others, and oppugners of the Tri-  
 nity by name, were expressly reserved for the persecu-  
 ting spirit of the Church to operate upon. How truly  
 then might Mr. Locke, writing to Limborch\*, soon  
 after the passing of this act, say, “ *Tolerantiam apud*  
 “ *nos jam tandem lege stabilitam te ante hæc audiisse*  
 “ *nullus dubito. Non ea forsan latitudine, qua tu &*  
 “ *tui similes veri, & sine ambitione, vel invidia*  
 “ *christiani optarent. Sed aliquid est prodire tenus.*  
 “ *His initiis jacta spero sunt libertatis & pacis funda-*  
 “ *menta, quibus stabilienda olim erat Christi ecclesia.*”

In the last session of parliament, the legislature  
 again humanely stepped forward for the relief of an-  
 other class of sufferers under our persecuting laws;  
 I mean the Catholics. The Bishops did not think  
 fit to oppose a bill supported by ministerial influence,

\* Locke's Works, vol. iv. p. 406.

more, perhaps, from motives of policy, than of humanity. They made a faint attempt in the House of Lords to postpone it to the next session, and then, making a virtue of necessity, gave it no further opposition. By this act, such Catholics as submit to take the oaths therein imposed are admitted to a toleration, differing little from that enjoyed by the Protestant Dissenters complying with the Toleration Act. With respect to the Nonjuring Catholics, they are still in a worse situation than any other sectaries. They may, indeed, be possessed of land, but they cannot live upon it in security. They are liable not only to be prosecuted as heretics in the ecclesiastical courts, and as recusants in the temporal ones, but also to other peculiar prosecutions, extending to the infliction of the heaviest penalties\*.

But it is not through the medium of spiritual courts, and by the coercion of spiritual censures only, that other Nonconformists, besides Papists, may be punished for their religious opinions; and Englishmen may be surprized to learn, that, notwithstanding the moderation which even High Churchmen now find it necessary to boast of, all those sectaries who do not come within the protection of the Toleration Act, or the statute enacted in the last session in favour of a particular class of Catholics, as oppugners of the Trinity, Moravians, Swedenborgians, Nonjuring Catholics, Jews, &c. are liable to penalties in the temporal courts, for

\* See these penalties enumerated at the end of Sir Henry Englefield's answer to the "Review," where he intimates that perhaps they may extend to *death* itself.

worshipping God according to their own modes, which reach their property, liberty, and even lives. For thus, according to Mr. Locke, stands the law respecting those, who still remain unprotected by a legal toleration.

“ In the 1st year of Queen Elizabeth, there  
 “ was a penalty of 1s. a Sunday and holiday, laid  
 “ upon every one who came not to the Common  
 “ Prayer then established. This penalty of 1s. a  
 “ time not prevailing as was desired, in the 23d  
 “ year of her reign was increased to 20l. a month,  
 “ and imprisonment for non-payment, within three  
 “ months after judgment given. In the 29th of  
 “ Elizabeth, to draw this yet closer, and make it  
 “ more forcible, it was enacted, that whoever, on  
 “ one conviction, did not continue to pay on the  
 “ 20l. per month, without any other conviction or  
 “ proceedings against him, till he submitted and  
 “ conformed, should forfeit all his goods, and two-  
 “ thirds of his lands for life. But this being not  
 “ yet thought sufficient, it was, in the 35th year of  
 “ that Queen, ——— enacted, that going to  
 “ conventicles, or a month’s absence from church,  
 “ was to be punished with imprisonment until the  
 “ offender conformed; and if he conformed not  
 “ within three months, then he was to abjure the  
 “ realm, and forfeit all his goods and chattels for  
 “ ever, and his lands and tenements during his  
 “ life; and if he would not abjure, or abjuring did  
 “ not depart the realm within a time prefixed, or  
 “ returned again, he was to suffer death as a felon\*.”

\* See Third Letter on Toleration, Locke’s Works, edition of 1777. vol. ii p. 496.



These laws are still put in execution; and about three years ago, in Cornwall, a poor fellow, a Dissenter, was libelled in the spiritual court for not attending divine worship at his parish church on Sunday. He had not taken the oaths required by the Toleration Act, but it being a sufficient defence to take them at any time during the persecution, he applied to the magistrates of the county at their quarter sessions, who illegally *refused to administer them*. The consequence was that he was excommunicated. Upon a representation from the committee in London for taking care of the civil concerns of the Dissenters, the chairman of the sessions acknowledged the error of the justices, and the man took the oaths at the ensuing sessions; but it was then *too late*. A noble peer (Earl Stanhope) in the year 1789, moved in the House of Lords for the repeal of these persecuting laws; but to the disgrace of the Church, the Bishops contrived to defeat the attempt.

The anxiety of the clergy to secure their favourite doctrine of the Trinity from being sacrilegiously disputed, occasioned those who denied it to be excepted out of the Toleration Act; but even this did not content them: for in the 9th and 10th of William the Third, an act was passed, (c. 32.) that (besides all the penalties abovementioned) persons educated in, or who have professed the christian religion within this realm, by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, denying any one of the persons in the Holy Trinity to be God, or the christian religion to be true, or the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority, such persons, upon conviction,

viſtion, for the firſt offence, “ ſhall be adjudged incapable, and diſabled in law, to all intents and purpoſes whatſoever, to have or enjoy any office or offices, employment or employments, eccleſiaſtical, civil, or military, or any part in them, or any profit or advantage appertaining to them, or any of them ;” and for the ſecond offence, ſhall be diſabled to ſue in any court, to be guardian of any child, or executor or adminiſtrator to any perſon, or capable of any legacy or deed of gift, or to bear any office or benefice for ever, within this realm, and ſhall ſuffer imprisonment for the ſpace of three years.

There is another circumſtance of great hardſhip and oppreſſion, which is becoming daily more grievous, viz. that all ſectaries, except Quakers and Jews, are obliged to ſolemnize their marriages according to the rites of the eſtabliſhed Church. Until the year 1753, their marriages, ſolemnized in their own congregations, were valid, and the alteration then made in the law has been productive of very ſerious hardſhips. There are now in Nottingham gaol ſome women, who have been confined there ſeveral years, and, unleſs the legiſlature ſhall humanely interfere, muſt be imprifoned *for life*. They are ſaid to be perſons of irreproachable character, and have been married according to the ceremonies of their own ſect ; but as they are neither Quakers nor Jews, their marriages are, in the eye of the law, invalid, and their children baſtards. They have been libelled in the eccleſiaſtical court for incontinency, and are now confined upon a ſentence of excommunication for not ſubmitting to its orders. As an inſtance of the abſurdity of this law, it may be obſerved,

served, that a Protestant Dissenter, who is entitled to the public enjoyment of his own mode of worship, cannot be married in his own church, while that privilege is allowed to Jews, who are not tolerated at all; whose synagogues are illegal conventicles, and who remain in England at the constant risk of prosecutions, by which their property, liberty, and life, may be forfeited.

So long, therefore, as the present system of church discipline shall remain established; so long as by no public act the right to persecute shall be disclaimed either by church or state; so long as the state shall leave large classes of citizens, professing the faith of Christ, to the censures of the spiritual courts, and keep in force laws, by which their fortunes, liberties, and lives may be taken away by the temporal ones; so long as sectaries shall be obliged to comply with the ceremonies of the established church in the solemnization of their marriages, it cannot with truth be asserted that a toleration of *all* the different sects of Christians, each in its own mode of worship and doctrines, is admitted in England, and made a maxim of *its* government.

My readers are now prepared for the following liberal passage in "the Review." "In this country, a statesman finds an established church amidst a variety of brawling sects, all enjoying *the utmost liberty of conscience*, yet all clamorous against the persecuting spirit of the hierarchy, *to whose candour and liberality* they are in great part indebted for the blessing of a general toleration\*." One might conclude from the be-

\* P. 18.

ginning of the sentence, that the established Church was more sinned against than sinning, and that all clamour and narrowness of spirit was confined to the dissenting sects. If the Reviewer had said, that a statesman finds in England one brawling sect *established*, which, claiming to be solely possessed of all truth, and the secret of saving souls, persecuted *all* others, until the civil power was obliged to take *some* under its protection, he would have been a little nearer the fact. Those Dissenters, who are exempted by the state from the jurisdiction of the spiritual courts, are obliged to the candour and liberality of the hierarchy for the blessing, as is a sheep to the gentleness of a wolf that is muzzled. Notwithstanding this, the moderation of the Church, and the happy situation of Dissenters in this country, are the constant topics of High Churchmen. The laymen of Suffolk, assembled to make resolutions in opposition to the late application of the Dissenters, declared it to be the earnest wish of their meeting, that the blessings of a *full* toleration should be extended to *Christians of all denominations*, “ which blessing  
 “ they conceive the Protestant Dissenters in Eng-  
 “ land do actually enjoy ;” and, if we may believe the clergy of the archdeaconry of York, the Toleration Act gives “ *full* liberty for *every man* to  
 “ enjoy his own religious tenets, and to worship  
 “ God in his own way.” The Catholics and Unitarians may call upon the gentry of Suffolk to carry their earnest wishes into effect ; and the Jews may request a copy of *their* Toleration Act from the clergy of the archdeaconry of York.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Passive Obedience and Non-resistance, Doctrines of the Church of England, and the Clergy infected by them.*

THE Reviewer, and his associates, have affected to take offence at the principles of the modern Dissenters, and have boldly challenged a preference for their own church, from the congeniality of its principles with those of the state. Whether they ought not to have cast out the beam out of their own eye, before they attempted to cast out the mote out of their brother's eye, let the world now decide. In this chapter my design is, to drag into public view the doctrines of the Church of England with regard to civil liberty. In so doing I will not (as the Reviewer and other High Churchmen have done with respect to the Dissenters) rest my proof of the doctrines of the Church on the writings of individuals (though where there is *one settled* rule of faith it might carry authority), but will shew what the principles of every *true* member of the Church of England are, or *ought to be*, from the articles of that Church; its other *public documents*; its *injunctions* and *canons*; its *homilies*; its *rubric* and *occasional forms of prayer*; the *orders of its metropolitans*; and the *public proceedings of the two universities*. In the result, when it shall appear that passive obedience and non-resistance are enforced,



ced, in such terms as *not to admit of any exception for cases of extreme necessity*, the public will judge whether Dissenters or Churchmen hold principles best adapted to our present happy constitution, *as settled at the revolution*. The Reviewer and his friends have provoked the enquiry by their unfounded calumnies, and the Protestant Dissenters have nothing to apprehend from a comparison.

In 1533, there was a convocation of the clergy, and at the conclusion was printed an explanation of the chief points of religion, signed by both the Archbishops, seventeen Bishops, eight Archdeacons, and seventeen Doctors of Divinity and Law, under the title of “ The Institution of a Christian “ Man.” This work was, in 1540, referred to a select number of bishops and clergy, who sat by virtue of a commission from the King confirmed in Parliament, and made many alterations\*. Henry VIII. himself added a preface two years afterwards, and it was printed at last under the new title of “ A necessary Doctrine and Erudition “ for any Christian Man, set furthe by the Kinges “ Majestie of England,” &c. In the preface it is said to be “ sette furthe with the advise of “ our clergy,” and to have been both seen and liked very well by the “ Lordes bothe spirituall “ and temporall, with the nether house of our “ parliament.” In 1542, Bonner, then Bishop of London, set out certain injunctions, in which

\* See Burnet’s History of the Reformation, 4th edition, vol. i. p. 234, 273,

he directed his clergy, to provide of their own, and study this book called "The Institution of a Christian Man," otherwise called the *Bishop's Book* \*. The commentary on the fifth commandment runs thus, "Subjects be bound not to withdraw their fealty, truth, love, and obedience towards their prince, *for any cause whatsoever it be,*" &c. In the exposition of the sixth commandment it is said, "Moreover no subjects may draw their swords against their prince *for any cause whatsoever it be.* ——— And although princes, which be the chief and supream heads of their realms do otherwise than they ought to do; yet *God hath assigned no judges over them in this world, but will have the judgment of them reserved to himself,* and will punish them when he seeth his time. And for amendment of such princes that do otherwise than they should do, *the subjects may not rebel, but must pray to God,* which hath the hearts of princes in his hands, that he so turn their hearts unto him, that they may use the sword which he hath given them unto his pleasure."

The thirty-nine articles were composed in a convocation of the clergy held in 1562, and confirmed in 1571, and contain "the true doctrine" of the Church of England. Not only every clergyman, but every youth, on his admission into the university of Oxford, and every graduate (with the exception of Bachelors of Arts at Cambridge) whether a layman, or in orders, at both universi-

\* Ibid. Collection of Records, to book iii. No. 26.

ties, is obliged to subscribe them. The thirty-seventh article, respecting civil magistrates, has these words, “ We give not to our princes the  
 “ administering either of God’s word, or of the  
 “ sacraments; but that only prerogative, which we  
 “ see to have been always *given to all godly princes*  
 “ in holy scriptures *by God himself*; that is, that  
 “ they should rule all estates and degrees *committed*  
 “ *to their charge by God*, whether they be eccle-  
 “ siastical or temporal, and restrain with the civil  
 “ sword the stubborn and evil doers.”

The thirty-fifth article declares the two books of homilies “ contain a godly and wholesome doctrine  
 “ necessary for these times,” and therefore orders them “ to be read in churches, by the ministers,  
 “ diligently and distinctly, that they may be un-  
 “ derstood of the people.” These homilies were so highly esteemed by the Church, that one of them, or a sermon, is to be read every Sunday in the church, and in the year 1636, on account of the plague, a form of prayer, together with an order for fasting, was put out by authority, and in the preface to the concluding exhortation we are told, that “ the name of homilies, by a misunderstanding  
 “ conceit, is not acceptable with many; and yet  
 “ they are nothing else in effect but epistles, or  
 “ declarations, *grounded upon the word of God*, to  
 “ teach Christian men and women their duties to  
 “ his divine Majesty, how to believe, and what  
 “ to practice, *carefully and soundly written unto*  
 “ *us by apostolical men, with the approbation of the*  
 “ *Church.*”

In the directions concerning preachers put out by authority the 5th of March 1685, they are directed, "that upon all good occasions they faithfully instruct the people in their bounden duty of subjection and obedience to their governors, superior and subordinate, of all sorts, and to the established laws, according to the word of God *and the doctrine of the Church of England, as it is contained in the homilies of obedience, and the articles of religion, set forth by public authority.*" Let us now see what these homilies of such high authority teach, as the bounden duty of subjection and obedience of the people to their governors.

The second part of the homily entitled, *Concerning good order and obedience to rulers and magistrates*, has this passage: "Subjects are bound to obey them (i. e. governors) as God's ministers, though they be evil, not only for fear, but for conscience-sake; and here, good people, let us mark diligently, that it is not lawful for inferiors and subjects in any case to resist, and stand against, the superior powers; for St. Paul's words be plain, that whoso withstandeth shall get to themselves damnation.—If they command us to do any thing contrary to God's commandment, in such a case we ought to say with the Apostle, *we must rather obey God than man*; but nevertheless, in that case, *we may not, in any wise, withstand violently, or rebel, against rulers, or make any insurrection, sedition, or tumults, either by force of arms or otherwise, against the anointed of the Lord, or any of his appointed officers*;  
"but

“ *but we must, in such case, patiently suffer all wrongs*  
 “ *and injuries, referring the judgment of our cause*  
 “ *only to God.*” Other extracts might be made to the like effect; the homily against disobedience, and wilful rebellion, divided into three parts, has many passages in the same strain. To give only one instance; the third part begins thus:  
 “ Ye have heard before, in this homily, of good  
 “ order and obedience, manifestly proved both  
 “ by scriptures and examples, that all subjects  
 “ are bounden to obey their magistrates, and for  
 “ *no cause to resist, rebel, or make any sedition against*  
 “ *them, yea, although they be wicked men.*”

One of these six homilies against rebellion is to be read on every fifth of November, if there be no sermon; and on the 30th of January, the minister is to read the first or second parts of the *homily against disobedience and wilful rebellion*, or a sermon of his own composing, *upon the same argument*. Most cordially do I agree with Mr. Burke in his remark, that “ politics and the pulpit are terms that  
 “ have very little agreement;” and that “ no sound  
 “ ought to be heard in the church, but the healing  
 “ voice of Christian charity.” But when he supposes that Dr. Price has *revived* this pulpit stile, after so long a discontinuance, he surely forgets these orders of the rubric. Twice at least in every year, for more than a century, from nearly ten thousand pulpits (supposing all the clergy to be obedient to the law) have the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance been preached to the  
 gaping



gaping multitude; and did a single sermon then, from a dissenting preacher, enforcing those principles which he thought (whether mistakenly is not the question) might be deduced from the glorious revolution, deserve such severe animadversion? I grant that most surely "the church is a place where "one day's truce ought to be allowed to the "dissensions and animosities of mankind." Let churchmen then repeal the acts by which the 30th of January and 29th of May are appointed for the preaching of *political* sermons, and inculcating principles hostile to public liberty; but if they are still to remain in force, I cannot think that the Throne or Church will be endangered by the Dissenting Ministers endeavouring, in their narrower sphere, to prevent the spreading of the contagion, and cherish in their hearers an attachment to our happy constitution, and a hearty loyalty and affection to the House of Hanover.

In the reign of Henry the Eighth (1536) certain injunctions were issued, by the first of which, all persons having cure of souls were enjoined, so many times in the year, to preach against the usurped power of the Pope, "and that the king's power "is, in his dominions, the highest power and potentate under God; to whom all men, within "the same dominions, *by God's commandment*, owe "most loyalty and obedience, afore, and above "all other potentates on earth." This was continued, in the same words, in the injunctions of

1538, and in those issued in the reign of Edward the Sixth (1547) and, with very little variation, in the injunctions of Queen Elizabeth, and the Canons of 1603, in the reign of James the First.

A Convocation was called by King James the First in 1602, and continued, by adjournments and prorogations, till 1610. The 33d canon of the first book, as given by Bishop Overall, who had been prolocutor, has these words: "If any man  
 " therefore shall affirm ——— that the rebellion  
 " *against any king, absolute prince, or civil ma-*  
 " *gistrate, for any cause whatsoever, is not a sin* very  
 " detestable in the sight of God, and therefore by  
 " all that fear the Lord to be eschewed, because it  
 " ever tendeth to mischief, and sometimes to the  
 " overthrow of the kingdom, principality, and coun-  
 " try, where it is raised, he doth greatly erre."

The fourth canon of the second book begins in these words, "Therefore if any man shall affirm,  
 " under colour of any thing that is in the scriptures,  
 " either that the deity of our Saviour Christ doth  
 " not, since his resurrection and ascension, other-  
 " wise execute the majesty and glory thereof in his  
 " humanity, than it did before his passion; or that  
 " Christ, now in glory, is not actually the heir of  
 " all things, as he is man so highly exalted, and  
 " both king of kings, and lord of lords; or that  
 " he now sitting at the right hand of God, in glory  
 " and majesty, as he is man, hath made an altera-  
 " tion in the manner of temporal government,  
 " *ordained by himself long before, as he is God; or*  
 " that now all the kingdoms in the world, being  
 " but

“ but one kingdom in respect of himself, *he doth*  
 “ *not allow the distributing of that his one universal*  
 “ *kingdom into divers principalities and kingdoms,*  
 “ *to be ruled by so many kings, and ABSOLUTE princes*  
 “ *under him, &c. &c. he doth greatly erre.*” And  
 many other passages of the same kind might be  
 selected.

The canons of 1640, though they never had  
 the force of laws *so as to bind the laity*, yet shew the  
 sense of the clergy of the Church of England at  
 that time. They were made and confirmed in full  
 convocation of the clergy of the provinces both of  
 Canterbury and York, and are still more full and ex-  
 press than the preceding passages. The first canon  
 says, “ that the most sacred order of kings is of  
 “ divine right, being the ordinance of God him-  
 “ self, founded in the prime laws of nature, and  
 “ clearly established by express texts, both of the  
 “ Old and New Testament; and for any person or  
 “ persons to set up, maintain, or allow, in any  
 “ their said realms or territories respectively, under  
 “ any pretence whatever, any independent, co-  
 “ active power, either papal or popular (directly  
 “ or indirectly) is to undermine their great royal  
 “ office, and cunningly to overthrow that most sa-  
 “ cred office, which God hath established, and is  
 “ treasonable against God, as well as against the  
 “ king. *For subjects to bear arms against their kings,*  
 “ *offensive or defensive, upon any pretence whatsoever,*  
 “ *is at least to resist the powers, which are ordained*  
 “ *of God; and though they do not invade, but*  
 G only

“ only resist, St. Paul tells them plainly, that they  
 “ shall receive to themselves damnation.”

These extracts from the necessary doctrine and erudition for any christian man, from the injunctions, canons, and homilies, are coteremporary interpreters of the rubrick. The prayer after the commandments runs thus : “ So rule the heart of thy chosen  
 “ servant, our king and governor, that he, *know-*  
 “ *ing whose minister he is*, may above all things  
 “ seek thy honour and glory ; and that we, and all  
 “ his subjects, duly *considering whose authority he*  
 “ *hath*, may faithfully serve, honour, and humbly  
 “ obey him, in thee, and for thee, according to thy  
 “ blessed ordinance.” In one of the prayers appointed to be used on the 30th of January, are these words : “ We acknowledge it thine especial  
 “ favour, that though for our many and great pro-  
 “ vocations, thou didst suffer *thine anointed, blessed*  
 “ *king*, Charles the First, this day to fall into the  
 “ hands of violent,” &c. The same expression occurs in the office for the 29th of May, to thank God for the restoration of the royal family.

In the form of prayer, with thanksgiving, for the 9th of September, 1683, for the discovery of the Ryehouse Plot, is this passage : “ Let us never for-  
 “ get how often and how wonderfully thou hast  
 “ preserved *thine anointed* and his people. Con-  
 “ tinue him a nursing father to this thy church, and  
 “ a minister for good to all his people ; and let us  
 “ and

“ and all his subjects look upon him henceforth,  
 “ *not only as the ordinance, but also as the gift of God,*  
 “ promising and performing *in thee, and for thee,*  
 “ all faithful duty and loyalty to him, and his heirs  
 “ after him,” &c.

King James the Second commanded, that the day on which he came to the throne (viz. 6th of February) should be kept as a day of thanksgiving, by a proclamation, dated 23d of December, 1685, and the form of prayer composed for that day is in the following strain:—“ Grant, we beseech thee,  
 “ Almighty God, that our sovereign lord the king,  
 “ whom of thine especial grace and favour thou  
 “ hast (as upon this day) *happily settled in the throne*  
 “ *of supreme government over us,* being strengthened,  
 “ and established with thy free and princely spirit,  
 “ the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the  
 “ spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and being  
 “ filled with the spirit of thy holy fear, may be  
 “ always a religious defender of thy holy faith and  
 “ church among us, a gracious governor unto all  
 “ his subjects, a glorious conqueror over all his  
 “ enemies, a mighty protector of the people committed to his charge, and a happy father of a  
 “ numerous posterity, *to rule these nations after him*  
 “ *by succession in all ages and generations;* and grant  
 “ also, gracious Lord, that we, and all his subjects, both of this kingdom, and in all other his  
 “ dominions, duly considering *that there is no power*  
 “ *but of God, and that the powers that be, are ordained of God,* may be subject and obedient to him,  
 “ *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake,* and



“ so may long enjoy, together with him, the con-  
 “ tinuance of these thy great blessings, which by  
 “ *him thou dost vouchsafe unto us.*”

In the year 1622, certain orders (dated the 4th of August) were sent by the archbishops of Canterbury and York, with the king's consent, to the several bishops of their respective provinces. The fourth is, “ That no preacher, of what title or de-  
 “ nomination whatsoever, shall presume from  
 “ henceforth, in any auditory within this kingdom,  
 “ *to declare, limit, or bound out, by way of positive*  
 “ *doctrine, in any lecture or sermon, the power, pre-*  
 “ *rogative, jurisdiction, authority, or duty of sove-*  
 “ *reign princes,* and therein meddle with matters of  
 “ state, and reference between princes and people,  
 “ *than as they are instructed in the homily of obedience,*  
 “ *and in the rest of the homilies, and articles of reli-*  
 “ *gion, set forth by public authority.*” These orders were again renewed in the reign of Charles the Second, and James the Second; and in the articles of Archbishop Sancroft, (July 16, 1688) immediately before the revolution, the clergy were enjoined in their sermons, four times at least in the year, to teach the people, “ that the king's power  
 “ being in his dominions highest under God, all  
 “ priests should, upon all occasions, persuade the  
 “ people to loyalty, *and obedience to his majesty, in*  
 “ *all things lawful, and to patient submission in the*  
 “ *rest,* promoting, as far as in them lies, the public  
 “ peace and quiet of the world.”

In

In the year 1622, one Knight, preaching at St. Peter's in the East, at Oxford, on Palm-Sunday, maintained in his sermon the lawfulness of resistance, for the sake of religion. For this he was sent by the vice-chancellor to prison, and, by the king's order, afterwards to Westminster, where he was confined in the gate-house for two years. Knight had defended himself by the authority of Paré, whose works the university of Oxford censured in full convocation, by a decree of the 25th of June, 1622. Among others, they censured this proposition, "that subjects, not private persons, but inferior magistrates, may take arms to defend themselves, the commonwealth, the church and true religion, against their sovereign or the superior magistrates, upon these conditions: if—1. The prince turn tyrant.—2. If he compel his subjects to commit idolatry, or blaspheme.—3. When any great injury is done.—4. If they cannot otherwise be safe in their fortunes, their lives and consciences, provided they do not seek their own advantage, and their arms be managed with much moderation." This proposition was censured as "false and seditious, and so craftily restrained under such conditions annexed, as every seditious person may make use of to vindicate himself." Paré's work was burnt in the church-yard of St. Mary, in Oxford, and at St. Paul's, in London; and at Cambridge, not only Paré's book, but certain writings of Bucanus, and Junius Brutus, were committed to the flames. The university of Oxford did not content itself with censuring Paré's

book, but also decreed and declared, “that, according to the canon of the holy scriptures, subjects ought by no means forcibly to resist their prince; and that *it is not lawful to take arms, either offensive or defensive, against the king, upon the account of religion, or any other pretence.*” All the members of the convocation were required to sign the decree, and all persons admitted to degrees, to take an oath to consent to the determinations of the convocation.

In 1647 (June) the university of Oxford met in convocation, to declare their judgment concerning the solemn league and covenant, &c. Among their reasons, drawn up by Bishop Saunderson, are found the following :

“We are not satisfied that our endeavour to preserve or defend the king’s majesty’s person and authority is so limited, as there it is (in the third article in the covenant) by that addition; namely, *in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdom.* For as much as—  
 “1. No such limitation of our duty in that behalf is to be found, either in the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, (which no Papist could refuse to take with such a limitation) nor in the protestation, nor in the word of God. — 3. *Such limitation leaveth the duty of the subject at so much looseness, and the safety of the king at so great uncertainty, that whensoever the people shall have a mind to withdraw their obedience, they cannot want a pretence from the same for so doing.* And again, especially being told in a late pamphlet, that the king  
 “not

“ not having preserved the liberties of the kingdom, &c. as of duty he ought, is thereby become a tyrant, and so ceaseth to be a king; and consequently, that his subjects cease to be subjects, and owe him no longer subjection. *Which assertion; since we heartily detest, as false and scandalous in the supposition, and in the inference seditious and devilish, we dare not, by subscribing this article, seem to give the least countenance thereunto.*”

The address of the university of Cambridge, presented on September 18, 1681, by Dr. Gower, then vice-chancellor, to the king at Newmarket runs thus: “ But no earthly power, (we hope) no menaces or misery, shall ever be able to make us renounce or forget our duty. We will still believe and maintain, that *our kings derive not their title from the people, but from God. that to him only they are accountable; that it belongs not to subjects either to create or censure, but to honour and obey their sovereign, who comes to be so by a fundamental, hereditary right of succession, which no religion, no law, no fault or forfeiture, can alter or diminish.*”

July 21, 1683, in full convocation of the university of Oxford, twenty-seven propositions, extracted from divers books, were, by unanimous assent and consent, decreed and determined to be “ repugnant to the holy scriptures, decrees of councils, writings of the fathers, the faith and profession of the primitive church, and also destructive of the kingly government, the safety of his majesty’s person, the public peace, the laws of nature,

“ and bond of human society.” Among other propositions were these :—“ 1. All civil authority “ is derived originally from the people.—2. There “ is a mutual compact, tacit or exprefs, between “ a prince and his fubjects ; and if he perform not “ his duty, they are difcharged from their’s.— “ 3. That if lawful governors become tyrants, or “ govern otherwife than by the laws of God and “ man they ought to do, they forfeit the right they “ had unto their government.—8. The doctrine “ of the gospel concerning patient fuffering of in- “ juries, is not inconfiftent with violent refifting “ of the higher powers, in cafe of perfecution for “ religion.—9. There lies no obligation upon “ chriftians to paffive obedience, when the prince “ commands any thing againft the law of our “ country ; and the primitive chriftians chofe ra- “ ther to die than to refift, becaufe chriftianity was “ not yet fettled by the laws of the empire.”

The whole twenty-feven propositions, and “ all “ and every ” of them, were adjudged “ to be falfe, “ feditious, and impious, and moft of them to be “ alfo heretical, and blafphemous, infamous to the “ chriftian religion, and destructive of all govern- “ ment in church and ftate.” Moreover, the books of Milton, Baxter, Goodwin, Owen, John- fon, &c. containing thefe reprobated doctrines, were ordered to be publicly burnt in the court of the public fchools, as books fitted to deprave good manners, ftir up fedition and tumults, overthrow ftates and kingdoms, and lead to rebellion, murder of princes, and atheifm itfelf ; and the reading of  
of



of those books was forbidden, under penalties. Nor was this all; for in perpetual memory of the decree, it was ordered to be entered in the registry of the convocation, and to be stuck up in the different colleges and halls. And all readers, tutors, catechists, and others, to whom the care and trust of initiating youth was committed, were commanded diligently “to instruct and ground their scholars in  
 “ *that most necessary doctrine, which in a manner is the*  
 “ *badge and character of the Church of England\**,  
 “ *of submitting to every ordinance of man for the*  
 “ *Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king as supreme,*  
 “ *or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him*  
 “ *for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise*  
 “ *of them that do well. Teaching that this submission*  
 “ *and obedience is to be clear, absolute, and without*  
 “ *any exception of any state, or order of men.*”

The decree was drawn up by Dr. Jane, dean of Gloucester, and the king’s professor of divinity, and subscribed by the whole convocation. It was pre-

\* Lake, Bishop of Chichester (one of the seven bishops that were sent to the Tower by King James the Second) on his death-bed, when his dissolution approached, received the sacrament, and, at that awful moment, with the utmost solemnity, made this profession, which he signed in the presence of five witnesses.  
 “ *Whereas the religion of the Church of England taught me the*  
 “ *doctrine of non-resistance and passive obedience, which I have ac-*  
 “ *cordingly inculcated upon others, and which I took to be the*  
 “ *distinguishing character of the Church of England, I adhere no*  
 “ *less firmly and stedfastly to that; and in consequence of it,*  
 “ *have incurred a suspension from the exercise of my office, and*  
 “ *expected a deprivation. I find in so doing much inward satis-*  
 “ *faction; and if the oath had been tendered at the peril of my*  
 “ *life, I could have only obeyed by suffering.*”

sented

sented to the king with great solemnity, on the 24th of July following, and very graciously received.

Well might Mr. Locke tell king William very plainly, "that if the universities were not reformed, "and other principles taught there than had been "formerly inculcated, they would either destroy "him, or some of his successors, or both \*." We all know how little was wanting in the next reign, to the completion of this prophecy.

If further proofs were required of the slavish principles of the Church of England from the reformation to the revolution, they might be furnished in abundance from the writings of the clergy. And it is not less extraordinary than true, that even those who took the most active part in favour of the revolution, were in their early days tainted, more or less, by these arbitrary maxims. Among others may be reckoned Tillotson, Tennison, Stillingfleet, Patrick, and even Burnet himself: nor is this surprising; for every person in holy

\* Life of Locke, prefixed to his Works, 1777, p. 26,

Bishop Burnet also observed, that "in those seats of education, "instead of being formed to love their country and constitution, and the laws and liberties of it, they are rather disposed to love arbitrary government, and to become slaves to "absolute monarchy." At length, however, there is some hope of a reformation, for the university of Oxford has lately refused the honour of a degree to Mr. Burke, the assertor of the rights of kings, though in the reign of James the Second they conferred it on a Mahometan.

orders was obliged, by the Act of Uniformity, solemnly to declare (nearly in the words I have before recited out of the “ Erudition of a Christian man”) that “ it is not lawful upon any pretence “ whatsoever to take arms against the king,” &c.\*

—With a body of clergymen, who had been preaching for 150 years the doctrines of slavish obedience to rulers, and who were bound by the most solemn engagements to support it; with the corporations of England new modelled by the court; and many of their members, and the whole militia † of the kingdom sworn to maintain the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, it seems little less than a miraculous interposition of divine providence, which preserved so many of the clergy and

\* This part of the declaration was taken away by 1 W. and M. c. viii. s. 11; and as far as the *State* is concerned, the clergy are at liberty to preach up resistance to tyrants. But alas! the principles of the Church are as hostile to liberty as ever.

† By the Corporation Act all persons were to be turned out by the commissioners that did not take the oath of passive obedience; and by the Militia Act all the officers of that corps were also obliged to take it. The act mentioned in the foregoing note, repealed so much of the Militia Act as imposed this oath; and this part of the Corporation Act expired long before the revolution. In the year 1675, an attempt was made to oblige all persons holding offices, whether ecclesiastical, civil, or military, privy counsellors, and members of either house of parliament, to take a similar oath, with a clause (copied from the Five-mile Act) not to attempt any alteration in the government, either of the Church or State; and after a debate of sixteen days, a bill for that purpose passed the House of Lords, but was lost by the dispute which soon afterwards took place between the two Houses.

laity

laity from the contagion of their church, and in spite of their earliest prejudices and engagements, made them at the revolution zealous assertors of civil liberty \*. Even so late as in the Convention Parliament, the Bishops endeavoured to obstruct, in the House of Lords, every attempt of the Commons to settle the constitution; and at length, when it was carried to agree with the Commons, and retain the word “abdicated,” and vote that the throne was become vacant, no less than twelve, out of the sixteen Bishops who were then present, entered their protests †. Thus, as has been justly observed, the standing army of James shewed a greater attachment to liberty than the prelates of the Church. Should these pages by chance fall into the hands of Mr. Burke, will he still think that his prejudice in favour of a Church which teaches the persecution of men for religious opinions, and passive obedience to rulers, “is not a prejudice destitute of reason, but involving in it profound and

\* Sacheverell, in his Sermon, thus abuses those who disavowed the principles of his Church: “In a word, to accomplish any wretched secular design, to gratify their pride or ambition, to feed their lust or avarice, to wreak their spleen or revenge, out of envy or disappointment, for a little paltry honour, money, or preferment, these false brethren will renounce their creed, and read the decalogue backward; be the very reverse of our blessed Saviour (whom like their primitive pattern they first sell and then betray), fall down and worship the very devil himself, for the riches and honours of this world.” The Dissenters could not complain much of his ill usage, when he thus treated the members of his own Church.

† Lord’s Journals, vol. xiv. p. 19.

“extensive

“ extensive wisdom ?” Such a prejudice may be expected to prevail among High Churchmen, in whose minds the Church is “ first, and last, and midst ;” but it may be fairly presumed that Mr. Burke is the only person assuming the character of a *Whig*, who, since the revolution, has hugged this prejudice so closely to his bosom.

Since the revolution no alterations have been made in the articles, canons, or homilies ; they are now in force, and subscribed, as before that glorious æra, and the rubric remains unreformed, and in daily use, so that in direct opposition to the genius of the British monarchy, passive obedience and non-resistance are *still* the doctrines of the Church. That their operation on the minds of the clergy was not wholly destroyed by the revolution, this kingdom has felt by sad experience. Those machinations, which shook the throne for four successive reigns, and ripened into two rebellions against the princes of the House of Hanover, were chiefly fomented and carried on by High Churchmen.

On the 16th of May, 1702, the House of Lords found themselves called upon to censure the most extraordinary sermon that perhaps ever disgraced the established pulpits, even on a 30th of January. It had been published, and intituled, A Sermon “ preached on January the 30th, 1701-2, in King “ Henry the Seventh’s Chapel, before the reverend “ Clergy of the Lower House of Convocation, by “ W. Binckes, D. D. a Proctor for the Diocess “ of



“ of Litchfield and Coventry.” The following paragraphs were read in the house :

“ And first, as to the near resemblance between  
 “ the parties concerned, as well the actors as the  
 “ sufferers, comparing those in the text with those  
 “ of the day. And here one would imagine the  
 “ latter were resolved to take St. Paul’s expres-  
 “ sion in the most literal sense the words will bear,  
 “ and crucify to themselves the Lord afresh, and,  
 “ in the nearest likeness that could be, put him  
 “ to an open shame. If with respect to the dignity  
 “ of the person, to have been born King of the  
 “ Jews was what ought to have screened our  
 “ Saviour from violence, here is also one, not only  
 “ born to a crown, but actually possessed of it. He  
 “ was not only called King by some, and at the same  
 “ time derided by others for being so called, but he  
 “ was acknowledged by all to be a King. He was  
 “ not just dressed up for an hour or two in purple  
 “ robes, and saluted with a Hail, King ! but the  
 “ usual ornaments of Majesty were his customary  
 “ apparel. His subjects owned him to be their  
 “ King, and yet they brought him before a tribunal.  
 “ They judged him ; they condemned him ; and,  
 “ that they might not be wanting in any thing to  
 “ set him at naught, they spit upon him, and treat-  
 “ ed him with the utmost contempt. Our Sa-  
 “ viour’s declaring, that his kingdom was not of this  
 “ world, might look like a sort of renunciation of  
 “ his temporal sovereignty for the present, desiring  
 “ only to reign in the hearts of men. But here  
 “ was nothing of this in the case before us ; here  
 “ was

“ was an indisputable unrenounced right of sovereignty,  
 “ both by the laws of God and men. He was the  
 “ reigning prince, and the Lord’s anointed; and  
 “ yet, in despite of all law, both human and divine,  
 “ he was, by direct force of arms, and the most  
 “ daring methods of a flagrant rebellion and vio-  
 “ lence, deprived at once of his imperial crown  
 “ and life.

“ The fact of this day was such a vying with the  
 “ first arch rebel, the apostate Lucifer; it was such  
 “ going beyond the old serpent, in his own way of  
 “ insolence and pride, that it is no wonder if he  
 “ then began to raise his head, and set up for  
 “ dominion in this world, when thus warmed and  
 “ enlivened by a fiery zeal in some, and rage in  
 “ others, to the degree of drunkenness, thirsting  
 “ after and satiating themselves in royal blood, and  
 “ in which respect only, heated to the degree of  
 “ frenzy and madness, the plea in my text may  
 “ seem to have some hold of them, ‘ Father for-  
 “ give them, for they know not what they do’.”

Notwithstanding its author had received the  
*thanks of the Lower House of Convocation* for this  
 sermon, the House of Lords made no scruple to  
 censure the book, and vote that in it “ there are  
 “ several expressions that give just scandal and of-  
 “ fence to all christian people;” but a motion that  
 the sermon should be burnt (as had been done just  
 before with some animadversions upon it) was nega-  
 tived; it was however ordered that the vote \* of

\* Lord’s Journals, vol. xvii. p. 131.

censure should be communicated to the Lord Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry.

Dr. Sacheverell preached a sermon before the lord mayor and aldermen of London, on the 5th of Nov. 1709 (which, at their request, he printed) containing the following passages:—

“ The grand security of our government, and  
 “ the very pillar upon which it stands, is founded  
 “ upon the steady belief of the subject’s obligation  
 “ to an *absolute and unconditional obedience to the su-*  
 “ *preme power in all things lawful, and the utter*  
 “ *illegality of resistance upon any pretence whatsoever:*  
 “ But this fundamental doctrine, notwithstanding  
 “ its divine sanction in the express command of  
 “ God in scripture, and without which it is im-  
 “ possible any government of any kind or deno-  
 “ mination in the world should subsist with safety,  
 “ and *which has been so long the honourable and distin-*  
 “ *guishing characteristic of our Church,* is now, it  
 “ seems, quite exploded, and ridiculed out of  
 “ countenance, as an unfashionable, superannuated,  
 “ nay (which is more wonderful) as a dangerous  
 “ tenet, utterly inconsistent with the right, liberty,  
 “ and property of the people, who, *as our new*  
 “ *preachers and new politicians teach us (I suppose by*  
 “ *a new and unheard of Gospel, as well as laws) have,*  
 “ *in contradiction to both, the power invested in them,*  
 “ *the fountain and original of it, to cancel their al-*  
 “ *legiance at pleasure, and call their sovereign to ac-*  
 “ *count for high treason against his supreme subjects*  
 “ *forsooth;*

“ *forsooth ; nay, to dethrone and murder him for a*  
 “ *criminal, as they did the royal martyr, by a judiciary*  
 “ *sentence ; and what is almost incredible, presume*  
 “ *to make their court to their prince, by maintain-*  
 “ *ing such antimonarchical schemes. But, God be*  
 “ *thanked ! neither the constitution of our church or*  
 “ *state is so far altered, but that by the laws of both*  
 “ *(still in force, and which I hope for ever will be)*  
 “ *these damnable positions, let them come either from*  
 “ *Rome or Geneva, from the pulpit or the press, are*  
 “ *condemned for rebellion and high treason. Our ad-*  
 “ *versaries think they effectually stop our mouths, and*  
 “ *have us sure and unanswerable on this point, when*  
 “ *they urge the revolution of this day in their defence.*  
 “ But certainly they are the greatest enemies of  
 “ that, and his late majesty, and the most ungrate-  
 “ ful for the deliverance, who endeavour to cast  
 “ such *black and odious* colours upon both. How  
 “ often must they be told, that the king himself  
 “ solemnly disclaimed the least imputation of re-  
 “ sistance in his declaration.—We see how ready  
 “ these incendiaries are to take the least umbrage,  
 “ to charge *their own cursed tenets* on the Church of  
 “ England, to derive their guilt upon it, and quit  
 “ scores with it for their iniquity ! Thus do they  
 “ endeavour to draw comparisons, and to justify  
 “ the horrid actions and principles of forty-one,  
 “ which have been of late years, to the scandal of  
 “ our church and nation, so publicly defended, not  
 “ only by the agents and writers of the *republican*  
 “ *faction*, but by some that have the confidence  
 “ to stile themselves *sons, and presbyters of the Church*

“ of England ; who, in open defiance of the most pe-  
 “ remptory declarations of God in scripture (never to  
 “ be evaded by any shifts or misinterpretations) and  
 “ the universal doctrine and expositions of the Catholic  
 “ Church upon it in all ages, with the exprefs testimony  
 “ and concurrence of our Church, from its reforma-  
 “ tion down to the present time, corroborated with the  
 “ sense of our legislature, so unexceptionably confirmed  
 “ in our laws, dare, in despight and contempt of all this  
 “ evidence, manifestly defend the resistance of the  
 “ supreme power, under a new-fangled notion of  
 “ self-defence ; the only instance they shew of  
 “ shame, that they dare not YET maintain rebellion  
 “ by its proper name ; yet if those silly pretences,  
 “ and weak excuses for it alledged, carry any  
 “ strength or reason in them at all, they will  
 “ equally serve to justify all the rebellions that ever  
 “ were or can be committed in the world. Now,  
 “ as the Republicans copy after the Papists in most  
 “ of their doctrines and practices, I would fain  
 “ know in this where the difference lies, betwixt  
 “ the power granted to (as ’tis supposed originally  
 “ invested, but from what commission God knows,  
 “ in) the people to judge and dethrone their sove-  
 “ reigns, *for any cause they think fit*, or a no less  
 “ usurped power of the pope to solve the people  
 “ from their allegiance, and dispose of sceptres and  
 “ diadems to his favourites, whenever he thinks  
 “ it *his interest* to pluck them from his enemies  
 “ heads. *Such villainous and seditious principles as*  
 “ these demand a confutation from that government  
 “ they so insolently threaten and arraign, and which  
 “ are



“ are only proper to be answered by that sword they  
 “ would make our princes bear in vain, by the so long-  
 “ called for censure of an ecclesiastical synod, and the  
 “ correction of a provoked and affronted legislature; to  
 “ whose strict justice, and undeserved mercy, I  
 “ commit both them and their authors.”

These passages made the ground-work of the first article of his impeachment.

When his trial came on, this intemperate zeal for the arbitrary power of the crown was instantaneously communicated, like an electric shock, to every part of the kingdom; the established clergy being already prepared to act as conductors. He was attended to Westminster Hall by one hundred of that body. *His cause*, Dean Swift tells us, was taken up as the cause of the Church, and the whole sacred order was understood to be concerned. In return, he defended himself by the authority of the Church, and the practice of its members. In one part of his defence he says:

“ The said Henry Sacheverell doth, with all  
 “ humility, aver the illegality of resistance *on any*  
 “ *pretence whatsoever*, to be the doctrine of the  
 “ Church of England, and to have been the most  
 “ general opinion of our most orthodox and able  
 “ divines from the time of the reformation to  
 “ this day: this doctrine hath, in the most solemn  
 “ manner, been taught in that university, where-  
 “ of he hath been for more than thirty years  
 “ a member; this hath been often, with public  
 “ approbation of each House of Parliament, preach-  
 “ ed and printed; and in terms of greater force

“ than any used by the said Henry Sacheverell,  
 “ hath, by the right reverend fathers of our  
 “ Church, dead and living, been avowed and  
 “ maintained.”

Sacheverell was by the Lords enjoined not to preach during the term of three years, and his two printed sermons, referred to by the impeachment, were ordered to be burnt by the common hangman. And the House of Lords, taking into consideration the judgment and decree of the university of Oxford, passed in their convocation the 21st of July, 1683, given in evidence on the trial, and thereupon lately reprinted, resolved, that it contained in it “ *several positions contrary to the constitution of this kingdom, and destructive to the Protestant succession, as by law established ;*” and it was thereupon ordered that it should be burnt at the same time by the common hangman.

But even in our own time, during the American war, my readers may recollect how violent many of the clergy of the establishment were against the colonists, and that sermons were preached, even by the highest dignitaries, couched in the most abject terms of courtly servility, and inculcating doctrines equally subversive of liberty on both sides of the Atlantic.

In one instance, these fashionable, but dangerous, tenets did fortunately meet with a check, and Churchmen were taught that the members of the British Senate were not to look for the principles of the constitution in their homilies or articles.

On

On the 30th of January, 1772, Dr. Nowell, Principal of St. Mary Hall, in the University of Oxford, preached a sermon before the House of Commons, in which was the following passage :

“ When men consider themselves placed in their  
 “ several subordinate stations, not by meer chance,  
 “ or by any compact or agreement of their own  
 “ framing; but by the will of him who is the  
 “ fountain of government, the supreme Lord of  
 “ heaven and earth; when they consider that *all*  
 “ *authority, dominion, and power, are his preroga-*  
 “ *tive, and derived from him to those whom his pro-*  
 “ *vidence has delegated to be his representatives upon*  
 “ *earth*; cheerful duty and willing obedience will  
 “ be the natural result of such reflections. To minds  
 “ under this persuasion, the ordinances of man will  
 “ recommend themselves to be, what they really  
 “ are, the *ordinances of God*; and the magistrate,  
 “ *under this character*, will appear venerable and  
 “ awful, as *the minister of God.*”

The House of Commons, as a matter of course, thanked him for this sermon on the day after it was preached, and requested that he would print it. Unluckily for the Doctor, he acceded to the request; for when it was discovered that, however consistent his principles might be with the doctrines of his Church, they were totally subversive of the present government, it was deemed necessary to pass a gentle censure on the preacher, as a hint to those who might occupy his pulpit in future. Accordingly, on the 25th of February, 1772, a motion was made for expunging the thanks, thus precipitately

given, from the Journals, and it was carried by 152 votes to 41.

Dr. Powell, in the first of his sermons, published in 1776, speaks of “ absurd and slavish principles of government, which now are fled into everlasting darkness,” and observes, that “ they left their *last* footsteps before the altars of God, and “ in the fairest temples of literature ;” evidently alluding to the university of Oxford. It is to be observed, that Dr. Powell was a member of the university of Cambridge, where some degree of liberality of sentiment prevails. How little he knew of the university of Oxford may be inferred from the following passage, extracted from the fast-sermon, preached by Dr. Miles Newton, before the university of Oxford, in the year after the observation was made. Alluding to the doctrines of original compacts, power derived from the people, and the lawfulness of resistance, he says, “ such wild, visionary, enthusiastic notions, have always been counteracted and opposed by the examples and *instructions* of this university, which may, without vanity, boast, that it has been steadier in its principles, and suffered more for its consistency, in the support of regal government, than perhaps any other place of the like nature in the christian world \*.”

One obvious inference from these instances, as well as from the late resolutions and conduct of the

\* The Extracts from Dr. Powell's and Dr. Newton's sermons, are taken from “ *Sylva; or the Wood:*” the 2nd Edit. p. 172.

clergy is, that the spiritual poison, which operated with deadly effect before the revolution, has not yet lost its effect, and that the reformation of one, at least, of the universities (as recommended by Mr. Locke) is still wanting. It is a most serious consideration, that the youth of our most illustrious families should, at their entrance into life, be obliged to declare (as the condition of being permitted to begin their course of education) that passive obedience and non-resistance are godly and wholesome doctrines, and then should be left in the care of those, by whom the principles of liberty must be, at best, but feebly inculcated.



## C H A P T E R V.

*The Intolerant Principles on which the Test Laws are defended, stated and answered; and the Protestant Dissenters shewn to be friendly to the Church.*

ONE accidental gleam of truth illuminated the Reviewer in writing the following passage: “ The light of knowledge, like the light natural, “ spreads itself by an inherent force of expansion; “ nor is it possible that the one, more than the “ other, should be confined to the spot where the “ blaze is first kindled. It is not, therefore, in the “ Protestant Church only, that the intellect of man “ hath been for two centuries or more in an improving state. Liberty of conscience hath its “ advocates, even among the Roman clergy. The “ Conclave, indeed, hath not yet renounced its detestable maxims.” This observation respecting the conclave may be retorted on the Church of England. Among *her* clergy, it is true, that liberty of conscience hath *her* advocates; but if any judgment may be formed of their numbers, from certain late resolutions, writings, and transactions, they are not very considerable. As the progress of learning, after having reached many individuals of the Roman clergy, has not, according to the Reviewer, reformed the doctrines of the conclave, so  
neither

neither has it reformed those of the Church of England. The same doctrines, the same discipline, that were established in the infancy of learning, disgrace her, after the intellect of man (that is, of other men) has been improving for more than two centuries. The clergy may be tolerant, but the Church is still a persecutor. And thus, in a Protestant country, a striking instance is exhibited, that an establishment, from not having advanced in improvement with the intellect of man, and been perfected from time to time according to the lights of each succeeding age, may at last hold doctrines hostile to the state, with which some whimsical theorists suppose it to be in alliance, and tenets which most of its clergy would think it disgraceful to avow. In England, the improved reason of the Catholics has taught *them* to despise the persecuting maxims of the established Church, and to pity the bigotry of their Protestant countrymen.

It is obvious, that under a Church claiming a divine origin, and assuming the possession of all *truth*, Nonconformists cannot be permitted to enjoy any degree of toleration as a *right*. And upon this principle, nothing would be more easy than to answer all the arguments that ever were, or ever can be urged, for the repeal of the Test Laws. The misfortune is, that as the world grew more enlightened, the principle was disputed, and churchmen in general became ashamed to avow it. Here I must except the wise corporation of Leicester, who retain the old-fashioned maxim of their Church, and when the repeal of the Test Laws was  
lately

lately under consideration, resolved, " That conscientious men have the strongest of all possible motives to support and extend their own party ; namely, the supposition that they alone are in possession of the *truth*." And Bishop Horsley, who still holds it to be erroneous, nay *sinful*, for men to think for themselves in matters of religion : In his charge to the clergy of his diocese, delivered at his primary visitation in 1790, having mentioned Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey, as examples of moral rectitude among the disciples of infidelity and atheism, he adds, " But let not the morality of their lives be mistaken for a righteous practice resulting from a perverse faith, or admitted as an argument of the indifference of error. Their moral works, if they be not done as God hath willed and commanded such works to be done, have the nature of sin ; and their religion, consisting in *private opinion* and will-worship, is *sin*, for it is *heresy*." So that to exercise the right of private judgment, and embrace any religious opinions, but those established by law\* ; to adopt any standard of faith but that sanctioned by the church, is *sinful* ! Could Bishop Horsley assert in stronger terms the infallibility of the establishment ? *Ex ungue leonem*. This protestant bishop seems to have applied the popish principle to the moral works of these unfortunate men, *Lutherani & Cal-*

\* The Abbot of Westminster pressed Sir Thomas More, that however the matter appeared to him, he might see his conscience was erroneous, *since the great council of the realm was of another mind, and therefore he ought to change his conscience*. Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation, vol. i. p. 150.

*vinistæ a Deo, & ecclesia, tanquam perniciosissimi heretici declarati, non magis etiam cum vera dicunt, audiendi sunt, quam diabolus* \*.

Of late, however, the champions of clerical usurpation have thought it *more prudent* to take another ground, but with little advantage. The formal recommendation, by the Reviewer, of SHERLOCK and WARBURTON, as elementary writers upon the subject of the Test Laws, shews the distressed condition of the argument; for they proceed upon principles totally repugnant to each other. With equal propriety might he have recommended *Descartes* and *Newton*, as elementary writers in philosophy; *Filmer* and *Locke*, on the subject of government; or *Hersley* and *Priestley*, on the Trinity. Bishop Sherlock's treatise was written while the act against occasional conformity was in force, with a view to shew that the total *exclusion* of all Nonconformists from offices was the object of the Test and Corporation Acts. But the legislature, by the repeal of the act against occasional conformity (soon after Sherlock's book was published) unfortunately confuted his arguments by a legislative declaration, that that exclusion was not intended to be *total*. Besides, Bishop Sherlock proceeded upon the generally exploded, though still established system, of all truth being confined to the established Church, and those who dissented, being in error; and "supported a Test Law on such reasoning as

\* Maldonat. Comment, in Matth. xvi. ver. vi.

" destroyed

“ destroyed a toleration \*.” Bishop Hoadley entered the lists on behalf of the Dissenters, and successfully maintained the right of private judgment. The conduct of Bishop Sherlock himself, sufficiently proves that *he* felt no reason to boast of the event of this controversy; for, in his riper years, he disapproved of his own performance, and never would permit this “ first of controversial writings,” to be printed with his other works †. How far the republication of a work, with which the author himself was dissatisfied, is justifiable to the public, or respectful to the Bishop’s memory, may be left to High Churchmen to determine.

Upon the discomfiture of Sherlock, Bishop Warburton took up the ruined cause. He admitted that an establishment was not defensible on the footing of its truth, but of its *public utility*; so far his system was more rational than his predecessor’s; and so far too “ even republicans” might agree with him. The outline of his scheme was borrowed from popish writers; who, claiming for their Church not merely independence of, but superiority over, the civil power, suppose an alliance to have been made between them. It was not easy to adapt that hypothesis to an ecclesiastical establishment

\* These are the words of Bishop Warburton, in the postscript to “ The Alliance between Church and State,” in answer to Lord Bolingbroke.

† Biogr. Britt. vol. vi. part ii. art. *Sherlock*; and see his life prefixed to the 6th Edit. of his Discourses, published in 1772.



created by, and in constant dependence on, the state. The absurdity of the attempt, however, stimulated the projecting brain of Warburton, and the awkward manner in which the tattered system was made to hang together, did not prevent its favourable reception among the despairing bigots of the Church. The treatise upon the alliance between Church and State has been an object of ridicule among the unprejudiced and liberal; but with the Reviewer and his party it is still applauded as "one of the finest pieces of scientific reasoning applied to a political subject."

It is impossible to avoid making an observation here, upon the difficulties to which High Churchmen have been driven to support their favourite Test Laws. Sherlock honestly maintained the right of the state to impose them, upon such principles as his Church afforded him. Warburton felt the weakness of his arguments, and entered into a train of "scientific reasoning," which nothing but despair could have suggested, and which, if admitted to be conclusive, would effectually overthrow all pretensions to a preference on behalf of the Church *as now* established: for it rests its claim on being made by the state the depositary of religious truth, while Warburton asserts that every Church establishment must depend upon an alliance with the state, founded only on its being the religion of the majority \*, and at the same time, sovereign and independent

\* Warburton's theory might be, in some degree, applicable to Scotland; for by the "Act abolishing prelacy," passed in 1689, "Prelacy is abolished, and all Acts establishing prelacy  
are

dent of the civil government. Again, the Church, as truth must be the same to day, to-morrow, and for ever, claims a right to *perpetual* establishment, while, according to Warburton, the state may cast off this ally whenever the public utility requires it. And thus one of the most powerful and dangerous enemies of *the present* Church establishment of England has been, by the Reviewer's penetration, distinguished among the most zealous of its friends.

It is necessary to form some precise idea of what a Church is, before we can understand what is meant by its *alliance* with a State. Mr. Locke defines a Church to be, "a voluntary society of men joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls;" nor does Bishop Warburton's definition seem to differ materially. Setting out with this definition, the hypothesis of an alliance between a Church and State, necessarily implies that there can be no *essential* connection between them. For suppose that (as the Reviewer expresses it) "the world were returned to that tumultuary state, out of which, as democratic politicians dream, civil society first arose, and out of that chaos of mankind new

"are rescinded, cassed, and annulled; and the King and Queen's Majesties did declare, that they, with assent and consent of the three estates of this parliament, will settle by law that Church government in this kingdom, *which is most agreeable to the inclinations of the people,*" and upon that ground Presbyterianism was afterwards established.

"communities

“communities were to be created,” those communities must exist for a time without alliance with any Church whatever. Men enter into society at first for the sake of self-preservation, and the protection of their temporal concerns, and they must have opportunities to meet in safety, which society only can afford, in order to communicate their religious opinions, and arrive at some harmony of sentiment, before they can agree to form themselves into a society for public worship. The very existence of a Church, therefore, presupposes a civil government, without which *it* could never have had a being; but the civil government in no degree depends on the Church. In fact, tribes of savage people have been known to live under a rude kind of civil government, not only without any form of Church discipline among them, but even without any knowledge of, or belief in, the existence of a God. How far the Church of Rome may form an exception is not the question. Bishop Warburton’s “scientific reasoning,” perhaps, might there be applicable, but it does not therefore follow that it can apply to Protestant Churches, or Churches in general, any more than the demonstration of a single unconnected proposition in Euclid can be made to govern every mathematical problem in his works.

However, according to Bishop Warburton (but not according to the Reviewer, for *he* speaks of the magistrate’s *making* and *unmaking* a Church) some sort of Church which had existed in the chaos of mankind, before societies were formed, and which

of course was perfectly independent and unconnected, made an alliance with the civil government in which it happened to be found, exactly as between two independent nations. Upon his plan, the magistrate was in duty bound to ally with that Church, and establish that religion which included the majority of his subjects. The Reviewer, more wary than the Bishop, and having felt the pressure of the argument drawn from the state of Ireland, where the civil government has allied itself with a Church, which does not profess a religion acceptable to the majority, and which, therefore, according to the Bishop's principles, is indefensible\*, tells us, that it is not universally true, that the magistrate is in all cases to be determined in the choice of his ally *by the voice of the majority of the people*; but the fitness of one Church more than another, by its internal form, to unite with the civil constitution, is also to be considered. Here Warburton and his pupil are a little at variance; and it would not be difficult to shew that in this choice of absurdities, Warburton's is the most unexceptionable system.

We are told, however, that, fortunately in England, "not only the superiority of strength and numbers, but *the advantage of assimilation to the civil constitution*, is on the side of the established

\* In Ireland, the majority are obliged to contribute to the religion of the minority, and the minority exclude the majority from public offices, notwithstanding Protestant Dissenters are not excluded.

“ Church \*.” That superiority of strength and numbers is so we readily admit ; but it remains for the Reviewer to prove the fitness of his Church above every other sect to unite with the present monarchical constitution of Britain. Here his subtlety cannot avail him ; for we have the principles of the Church and State of England detailed in the most authentic records, and it is impossible to conceive of any thing more opposite.—Let us view them in contrast with each other.

*Principles of the State.*

I. That all kingly governments originate in a solemn compact made between the king and the people †.

II. That kings are trustees for their subjects, and invested with power only for their advantage.

III. That the people may resist a king, who *endeavours* to subvert

*Principles of the Church ‡.*

I. That all kingly governments originate from God.

II. That kings, holding their crowns by divine right, and being the Lord’s anointed, are accountable to God only.

III. That the people may not, in any case, even that of religion, re-

\* Review, p. 19.

† See chapter iv.

‡ See Resolution of both Houses, returned from the Lords, 7 February, 1688. Com. Journals, vol. x. p. 20.—See too the Declaration of Right.



and extirpate their religion, laws, and liberties\*.

sist their king; but must peaceably submit to all his measures, however oppressive or wicked.

And that distant colonies may resist a parent country, which manifests a hostile mind against them, *by endeavouring to tax them without their own consent* †.

IV. That the crown of England, and the descent, limitation, and *inheritance* thereof may be limited and bound by Act of Parliament‡.

IV. That the crown of England, descending by divine, hereditary, indefeasible right, neither it, nor the descent, limitation, or inheritance thereof, can be limited or bound by any human authority whatsoever.

Sacheverell, the champion of passive obedience and non-resistance, discovered, as well as the Reviewer, a wonderful assimilation between the civil constitution and the established Church. The con-

\* The Bill of Rights, 1 W. and M. c. ii. sess. 2.

† The recognition, on the part of Great Britain, of the independence of the United States of America; Mr. Burke's letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol in 1770; and the Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, p. 38.

‡ The Act of Succession, 6 Ann. c. vii. s. 1.

stitution of England, says he, “ both in Church  
 “ and State, has been so admirably contrived, with  
 “ that wisdom, weight, and sagacity, *and the temper*  
 “ *and genius of each so exactly suited and modelled to*  
 “ the mutual support and assistance of one another,  
 “ that it is hard to say whether the doctrines of the  
 “ Church of England contribute more to authorize  
 “ and enforce our civil laws, or our laws to main-  
 “ tain and defend the doctrines of our Church.”

Either the Reviewer must be an advocate for the divine right of kings, and then he and Sacheverell may very well agree in the observation, or there must be something extremely ductile in a Church, which possesses this almost miraculous power of exactly suiting either of two civil constitutions directly repugnant to each other. Sacheverell's defence on his impeachment was, that he had strictly conformed himself in his sermon to the doctrines of the Church; and, among other authorities, he produced the famous Oxford judgment and decree, made, as beforementioned, in 1683. These, it seems, however, were not the doctrines of the State; for Sacheverell was convicted and punished, and that judgment and decree burnt by the common hangman. Nor in more modern days could Dr. Nowell escape animadversion from that branch of the legislature to whom he preached in the same strain. While this country was curst with the tyranny of the Stuarts, the Reviewer's observation might have been perfectly true; for then, indeed, was found a

wonderful fitness in the principles of the Church to unite with those of the State. The revolution introduced a happy change in the civil constitution, and liberty became the portion of Englishmen; but the Church remained the same, and slavish are *still* her doctrines. Notwithstanding this, the clergy have dared to boast of *their* ecclesiastical constitution, and its principles being *essential* to the support of this free state, even under the auspicious reign of one of that family, whose right to the throne High Churchmen have hardly yet ceased to dispute !

Misled by these clerical advisers, the first resolution of the county of Warwick, was, “ that the “ Church of England, as by law established, is an “ *essential* part of the British constitution ;” and the gentlemen, clergy, and inhabitants of the city of Coventry, “ have been led,” it seems, “ to consider the ecclesiastical establishment as *essentially* “ incorporated with our national polity,” &c. That such absurd notions should prevail in the county where Sacheverell lived and preached, is hardly matter of surprize ; but that Mr. Burke, who affects to be an apostle of Whiggism, and prides himself on the consistent tenor of his public conduct, should fall into the same error, is not easily to be accounted for. “ It is on some such “ principles,” says he “ that the majority of the “ people of England, far from thinking a religious “ national establishment unlawful, hardly think it “ lawful to be without one.” ——— “ This prin-  
 7 “ ciple

“ ciple runs through the whole of their polity.  
 “ They do not consider their Church establishment  
 “ as convenient, but as *essential to their State*; not  
 “ as a thing heterogeneous and separable; some-  
 “ thing added for accommodation; what they may  
 “ either keep up or lay aside, according to their  
 “ temporary ideas of convenience. They consider  
 “ it as *the foundation of their whole constitution,*  
 “ *with which, and every part of which, it holds an*  
 “ *indissoluble union. Church and State are ideas*  
 “ *inseparable* in their minds, and scarcely is the one  
 “ ever mentioned without mentioning the other\*.”

One might almost suspect that the gentlemen, clergy, and inhabitants of Coventry, had assisted in the composition of this paragraph. That Mr. Burke has here deserted the principles of the Old Whigs will be apparent to any one who will take the trouble to refer back to the times in which they lived. Where, for example, in the works of the Whig *Bishops*, for such there were in those days, will he find that the Church is *essential to the State*, or that our *whole constitution is founded* upon it? The Bishops Burnet and Hoadley taught a different doctrine, and found it difficult enough to reconcile them at all with each other.

An alliance might indeed be pretended between a state and the papal hierarchy, where that is the established religion, because it claims to be separate from, and independent of, all civil government.

\* Reflections on the Revolution in France, 1st Edit. p. 147.

But when Henry the Eighth shook off the papal yoke, he did not seek the alliance of any church then existing, but actually made a church of his own; and, though a layman, assumed the supremacy *as king*, founding his claim on *divine right*, and the *word of God*, with powers almost as great as had been before usurped by the pope, and burning those who did not believe the doctrines he had sanctioned. The act concerning the deprivations of the Bishops of Salisbury and Worcester (25 Hen. 8. c. 5.) has this preamble: "Where before this  
 " time, the Church of England, *by the king's most*  
 " *noble progenitors*, and the nobles of the same,  
 " have been *founded, ordained, and established, in the*  
 " *estate and degree of prelatie dignities, and other pro-*  
 " *motions spiritual, &c.*" And the 1st section of the statute of the 37th of Hen. 8. c. 17. has these remarkable words: "Whereas your most royal  
 " majesty *is, and hath always justly been, by the word*  
 " *of God, supreme head in earth of the Church of*  
 " *England*, and hath full power and authority to  
 " correct, punish, and repress all manner of here-  
 " sies, errors, vices, sins, abuses, adulteries, hy-  
 " pocrites, and superstitions, springing and grow-  
 " ing within the same, and to exercise all other  
 " manner of jurisdictions, commonly called ec-  
 " clesiastical jurisdictions," &c. When then did any alliance take place, by which the church gave up its supremacy to the king? He claimed it, and exercised the powers belonging to it, as given to him *by the word of God*, down to the revolution; and



and the canons, and all the public acts of the church, acknowledged this *divine right*. The clergy are now bound by those canons and public acts, and therefore must still acknowledge it. But if the divine right to the supremacy was lost at the revolution, with the divine right of kings, and the apostolical succession of bishops, it must now stand, as they do, merely on the authority of the state, and be a delegation of power *from the people*.

Mr. Robinson observed, "that the supreme head of the Church of England is a king or a queen, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Prelatical, or Popish." The "Reviewer" complains of this calumny, as he calls it, though he does not deny that it *has been* so. Mr. Robinson does not mean, as the Reviewer falsely insinuates, that a popish king may *now*, in defiance of an act of parliament, preside, but that there *is* nothing in the internal government of the *church* itself to prevent a Papist from presiding over it; the bishops themselves must have thought so, when they voted against the exclusion of James the Second; and when, after the revolution, they voted that he had not abdicated the throne. It shews the wonderful pliability of this church, if its supremacy is derived in any other way than through the ordinance of God, that its head may be a male or female, or of a religion hostile or friendly, as the state thinks fit. Like the Vicar of Bray, it takes the strongest side; and one has observed, that if its members were as good-natured as its constitution, it would be *the best*

*bred, civilest church in Christendom.* After William the Third had landed with an armed force in England, and before the flight of James the Second, it must have shocked the pious clergy to put up prayers, in the same service, for blessings on the latter, as the *Lord's anointed*, followed by a prayer for the Prince of Orange, whom God had sent to be the defender of our laws and religion, that his person might be protected, *his hands strengthened*, &c.!

It is manifest, from papers preserved by Bishop Burnet\*, that Archbishop Cranmer was not a supporter of the claim of the clergy to a *spiritual* commission, but that he conceived the king might nominate the ministers of God's word †, exactly as he might appoint any civil ministers. Accordingly, Henry the Eighth delegated this power to Cromwell, as his vicar-general; and bishops condescended to hold their prelatie dignities under commissions granted by the crown, *during pleasure* ‡. These commissions empowered them *to ordain and deprive*

\* History of the Reformation, vol. i. Collect. of Records to Book iii. No. 21.

† In the injunctions to the clergy, made by Cromwell, is this article: "Item, that ye shall admit no man to preach within any your benefices, but such as shall appear unto you to be sufficiently licenced thereunto *by the king's highness, or his grace's authority*," &c. Ibid. vol. i. Collection of Records to Book iii. No. 11.

‡ The commission of this nature, granted to Bonner is preserved in Bishop Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. i. Collection of Records, Book iii. No. 14. In the Church of  
of

*deprive priests*, and perform all the other episcopal functions \*. Under them they executed all spiritual jurisdiction, excommunicating and inflicting all other spiritual censures *in the name of the king*, and by his authority; and these commissions were renewed when Edward the Sixth came to the throne †. Bonner was deprived of his bishoprick by *lay* commissioners ‡, and several other bishops were deprived §, and the mode of election and consecration in future settled by acts of parliament. In 1637, William, Bishop of Lincoln, upon a charge of having spoken disloyal words, and suborned witnesses, was, by the court of star-chamber, fined 10,000*l.* committed to the Tower, and suspended *ab officio & beneficio* ||. The discipline and doctrines of the church have been revised and altered several times since the Reforma-

of Scotland, while episcopacy was established, the king's supremacy was so absolute, that the office of a bishop there was conferred only *durante bene placito*; and in the reign of King James the Seventh (i. e. James the Second of England) one was deprived of the bishoprick of Dunkeld, by a letter sent by the king to his council, which declared him incapable of any other inferior benefice within the kingdom. Oldmixon's *Memoirs of North Britain*, p. 82.

\* Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. ii. p. 206.

† Vol. ii. p. 5.

‡ Ibid. p. 120.

§ See these Acts. Ibid. Collection of Records to Book ii. No. 11 and 12.

|| Rapin's Hist. of England, vol. ii. p. 302.

tion,

tion, by authority of the state. The spiritual courts, originally derived from the king, and for a time conducted in his name, are now sanctioned by an act of parliament; and the heresies cognizable in them reduced to a particular standard, and whole classes of heretics exempted from their jurisdiction by the same authority. At the Revolution, several bishops were deprived, and all pretence for an apostolical succession (as moderate churchmen and Bishop Warburton allow) was lost; and in the reign of Queen Anne, Bishop Atterbury was deprived of "all his offices, dignities, promotions, " and benefices ecclesiastical whatever," by a bill of pains and penalties, which declared, that from thenceforth the same should be "*actually void, as if he were dead*," and Dr. Bradford was appointed to succeed him. At the Union, the Church of Scotland was declared to be a *true* one, as well as the Church of England; and by a late act of parliament\*, English prelates may consecrate the subjects of foreign states bishops, but such consecration shall not enable them, or deacons or priests admitted by them, to exercise their respective offices within his majesty's dominions. These instances may suffice to prove, that the idea of the church being merely the *creature* of the state is not of novel invention †; and others might be produced, if

\* 26th of Geo. the Third, c. 84.

† Dr. Nourse, preaching at Alresford, so long ago as Aug. 31st, 1708, at the primary visitation of Jonathan, Lord Bishop of Winchester, p. 3. said: "But there is a race of men  
" sprung

if necessary, of the civil government interfering in the spiritual concerns of the church.

As well then may the ivy, clinging round the oak, boast of an alliance with its supporter, or rather a puppet with the man who plays the wires. In the latter case, the lifeless image is the creature of his fancy ; it has no powers but what he has given it ; it can use them to no purposes but such as he pleases ; it moves and ceases to move at his command, and may be destroyed when he thinks fit. The Reviewer dignifies this preposterous scheme too far, in supposing that the Dissenters think it “ profane and “ antichristian ;” but they are generally of opinion, that the whole hypothesis is a wild and ridiculous conceit ; and, as applied to this country, has no foundation in fact. They admire the ingenuity of the workman, who, with infinite labour, has, out of such cast-off-rags, been able to make a garment, though pieced all over, and in no degree calculated to fit ; but they smile at his vanity, when, notwithstanding the awkward thread-bare appearance, he boasts that he has fitted the wearer exactly, and with a *new* suit.

“ sprung up among us, who, whether out of flattery to the  
 “ civil powers, or envy to the prosperity of the clergy, or  
 “ with a design to subvert all religion, do boldly assert, that *the*  
 “ *spiritual function is a mere creature of the state ; that magistrates*  
 “ *may consecrate whom they will, and he becomes a priest ; that the*  
 “ *spiritual character ceases whenever they please to put an end to it ;*  
 “ *that particularly the clergy of the Church of England (than which*  
 “ *none ever had a more regular mission) have no authority or*  
 “ *powers but what they derive from the prince, as the prince ori-*  
 “ *ginally derives his from the people.*”

Upon



Upon Warburton's principles, it would not be difficult to prove, that the Royal Society has as good a claim to an alliance with the State as the Church. The object of the Royal Society is the promotion of natural, that of the Church, the promotion of religious, knowledge. Both were originally voluntary, and both are engaged in pursuits perfectly independent of the State, for opinions in matters of philosophy are as little cognizable by the civil power, as in matters of religion, and the care of the civil society extends only to the body and its concerns, and the care of this scientific society only to the mind. The Royal Society and the Church were both incorporated, and the mode of keeping up a succession in their respective corporations regulated by the civil power, and the supremacy of both is in the king. In short, all the arguments used by Warburton to prove the *necessity* of some union or alliance between the state and a *religious* society, apply, however ridiculous it may appear, with equal force to a *scientific* one. An enemy to establishments in general might add other particulars in which there is a material difference; for in the Royal Society there are no creeds established by authority to fetter the energy of the human mind, and it is supported by the *voluntary* subscription of its friends.

The word "Toleration" has a perfectly distinct signification, when used by Nonconformists, and High Churchmen; and this has occasioned no  
small

small confusion in the different publications, and speeches in the House of Commons, respecting the repeal of the Test Laws. Warburton, seeing that Sherlock's arguments were subversive of all toleration, found it necessary to change the plan of defence, and giving up the principles of his church, allowed that Dissenters from an establishment ought to be tolerated in their own modes of worship, and in teaching their own doctrines. This has been dignified by Lord North and others, with the epithet of a *complete* toleration. Even, in this limited sense, we have seen it is not enjoyed by *all* the English Nonconformists; but Warburton did not act fairly by his readers, when, after praising, and seeming to adopt, the arguments of Mr. Locke in favour of toleration, he imposed upon them a counterfeit of base metal, instead of the sterling original. With Mr. Locke and the Nonconformists, toleration means the enjoyment of religious liberty, to be restrained on no pretence whatever, except where it might have been restricted by a civil government, under which no church was established; but with Warburton and High Churchmen it is only an *indulgence*\* extending to worship and discipline, granted to *such persons*, and on *such*

\* Sacheverell used this phrase in his sermon, and Queen Anne, in her speech to both houses of parliament, in 1710, was weak enough to say, that she would maintain the *indulgence* (not *toleration*, as had been the usual language from the throne) granted by law to scrupulous consciences. This change to Sacheverell's expression, we are told by Bishop Burnet, was much observed. Modern High Churchmen almost always speak of the *indulgence* granted by the Toleration Act.

*conditions,*

*conditions*, as the civil magistrate may think fit. The ground-work of their whole system is, that it is his duty to restrain, so far as *he* thinks expedient for that purpose; and, as I have intimated before, this introduces the whole system of persecution (which Warburton artfully affects to give up) not indeed to root out error, and save men's souls, but to *secure the established church*. The extent of this persecution must depend, in general, on the bigotry or timidity of the established church. Thus we are taught in England, that the exclusion of Nonconformists from offices is a *necessary* restraint, to prevent them from doing mischief to the establishment, while, through the whole extent of Europe, and every other part of the British empire, the exclusion of Nonconformists from offices is deemed an *unnecessary* precaution. The university of Oxford, in their petition presented in 1779, against the bill for relief of protestant dissenting ministers and schoolmasters, which at first required *no test* of their principles, declare themselves friends to toleration only, "so far as the same may be *consistent* " *with the interests of christianity*, and the security "of our happy establishment in church and state\*." Woe be to Jews and Infidels, if the principles of the university of Oxford are taken as the standard of English Toleration! and should the imaginary fears of High Churchmen affect our legislators, it may hereafter be thought necessary, in this bigotted country, to secure the church by the confiscation of the property, or destruction of the lives, of Non-

\* Commons' Journals, vol. 37. p. 299.

conformists. Such may be the blessed effects of Warburton's *tolerating* system !

That the restrictions to be imposed on Nonconformists are to vary as the danger to the established church is more or less imminent, is clear ; for the Reviewer tells us, that the right of private judgment cannot “ be acknowledged *without restriction*, “ *more or less*, by any established church in Christendom ; a denial of any such unlimited right,” (as the Nonconformists contend for) “ being implied “ in the very idea of an establishment\*.” And this he farther explains at the conclusion of his preface, by his hearty prayer (good, holy man !) that our indigenous Dissenters may “ open their eyes “ to the discernment of this truth ; that tolera- “ tion on the part of government, and a cheerful “ submission on the part of the tolerated *to some* “ *necessary restraints*, are the only terms upon “ which Churchmen and Dissenters *can ever walk* “ *together as friends.*” Here he speaks out boldly, and in the language of authority ; and let me add also, that in these two short sentences, he has done more injury to the established church, than Messrs. Price, Priestley, and Robinson, in all their publications. He has here given to the enemies of the church the strongest argument that can be devised against establishments *in general*. If it is “ implied in the very *idea* of an establishment,” that the right of private judgment *must* be restrained and limited, and that the civil government

*must* exercise a jurisdiction over the consciences of men, and that too, to *any* extent, every establishment is founded in oppression, and the government that supports it can be just neither in its principles nor administration. The Nonconformists have lamented the injustice of their country, which laid them under restraints and disabilities, for differing from the establishment in certain opinions, which do not in the smallest degree prevent them from being good subjects, or faithfully performing any civil duties. But they have not been accustomed to consider these oppressions as so *necessarily* interwoven with the establishment, as that in seeking their own relief, they must in proportion accelerate its destruction. They have not been accustomed to look with an hostile eye to the Church. But if the only terms on which they and Churchmen can ever walk together as friends, are the submission to such necessary restraints as *Churchmen* may think fit to impose, they must feel it their duty to enter a protest, and refuse the proffered amity.

The next step in the Reviewer's argument should be to prove, that the exclusion of Nonconformists from public offices is one of the *necessary* restraints he has just alluded to. To do this, he must lay down as a general principle that which is universally contradicted by the experience of mankind. Not a single state on the continent of Europe can he point out where such exclusion takes place; one part of Great Britain itself has generously disclaimed to owe the security of her church to such  
injustice;



injustice\* ; and another part of the British empire has parted with its test law, and felt no injury to its

\* At the Union, the parliament of Scotland declined to stipulate for a Test Act, for security of the established church ; and when the act in favour of the episcopal clergy of Scotland passed, a motion was made to insert a clause in the bill, “ to oblige all persons in Scotland, who had any civil or military office, or any salary, or place of profit under the government, to attend divine service according to the law of Scotland.” It was rejected, the major part of the Scots members voting against it. *Oldmixon’s Memoirs of North Britain*, p. 270.—How dignified and generous this conduct of the people of Scotland, compared with the unjust and disingenuous terms on which they were permitted to enjoy a toleration in this country ! But this liberality of sentiment might well be expected from a nation, whose parliament, in the beginning of King William’s reign, had passed an act “ rescinding all penal laws on such as separated from the *new* established Church, or kept conventicles, and taking away all tests, and other letts, in order to incapacitate all Protestants for employments, without distinction ; and that every man may have full liberty to serve God his own way.” *Ib.* 85.

The 4th section of the act of Parliament of Scotland, *for securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government within the kingdom of Scotland*, made perpetual in the 25th article of the Union, “ declares and statutes, that none of the subjects of this kingdom shall be liable to, but all and every one of them for ever free of any oath, test, or subscription *within this kingdom*, contrary to or inconsistent with the aforesaid true Protestant religion, and Presbyterian Church government, worship, and discipline, as above established ; and that the same, *within the bounds of this Church and Kingdom*, shall never be imposed upon, or required of them in any fort.” Suppose a subject of Scotland to be made a baron of the exchequer there, or governor of Fort William, is he not liable to the Act of 16th Geo. the Second, c. 30. and bound to take a test inconsistent with the established religion of his country ? And is not the imposition of the English test laws upon

its establishment. How then can this restraint be *necessary* to support *every* established church, when *all but one* can do without it? There must be "something rotten in the state of Denmark," something peculiarly weak in the constitution of the Church of *England*, which induces *it* to rely on a support rejected by all other countries.

Dr. Sacheverell had little confidence in its merits as a Church, when he called the Corporation and Test Acts the *only* security it had to depend upon; or in the efficacy of that security, which, even in his time, he says, the Dissenters "have so far  
" eluded by their abominable hypocrisy, as to have  
" *undermined her foundation, and endanger the govern-*  
" *ment*, by filling it with its professed enemies." The inhabitants of Manchester hold a different language in their late resolutions, and "approve and  
" admire the wisdom of our ancestors, in enact-  
" ing the receiving the sacrament of the Lord's

Scottish subjects an infraction of this stipulation in the articles of Union?

The Church of Scotland has felt her degraded situation, and made more than one effort to recover her independence. In 1715, the General Assembly drew up a memorial, stating, "that  
" it is an inequality and hardship upon the established Church of  
" Scotland, that those of her communion, who are employed  
" in his majesty's service in England or Ireland, should be  
" obliged to join in communion with the Church of England." In 1790, the Church of Scotland again came forward to state her own grievances, and though the Reviewer even had admitted she would deserve a *respectful* hearing, the House of Commons rejected the prayer of her memorial in a very thin House, the votes being 149 to 62, most of the Scotch members voting in the majority!

" Supper,

“ Supper, according to the usage of the Church of  
 “ England, as a *sufficient* test, and *effectual* safe-  
 “ guard to our happy constitution in Church and  
 “ State;” so that now neither the foundation of  
 the Church is undermined, nor the government  
 endangered ! It is a comfort that the morals of the  
 Dissenters are so wonderfully improved since Sa-  
 cheverell’s time !

The apprehensions of the Reviewer, are, lest the  
 Church should be injured by the opportunities given,  
 by repealing the test laws, to the zealous and cun-  
 ning Nonconformists, which would operate to its  
 gradual ruin \*. In another place he speaks of it as  
 being the *remote* but certain, consequence; and inti-  
 mates that it may be *more than a century* in com-  
 pleting †—and this we may presume is the *distant*  
*probability* mentioned in the resolutions of the  
 Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. Un-  
 der these circumstances the experiment might be  
 worth the trying, and could be attended with little  
 risk; for during this very slow and gradual process,  
 the legislature might at any time step in to prevent  
 the mischief. The experience of Scotland and Ire-  
 land at home, and of all the nations in Christendom  
 abroad, might give confidence to any politicians,  
 but priests. Moreover, it may deserve the serious  
 consideration of the well-wishers to the Church,  
 whether the eager zeal of the sons of bigotry may  
 not accelerate its fall. The Church was established  
 more than two hundred years ago, in the infancy

\* P. 54.

† Ibid.

of learning in Europe. The intellect of man has been improving ever since, and yet *the Church* (I speak not of Churchmen) has made *no improvement at all*. To suppose that there is nothing in its doctrines or discipline that can be objected to, or improved, is an absurdity; it is to set up infallibility, and deny that the intellect of man is capable of improvement. Notwithstanding this, High Churchmen put their *veto* upon every attempt at reformation, and answer argument and reason by an appeal to the passions of the people, and the cry of “danger to the Church.”—In this manner they have, for a time, defeated the Dissenter’s attempt to obtain the repeal of the test laws.—But can it be wise, in this age of liberality, or (as the Reviewer would say) of licentiousness, to provoke the spirit of enquiry, and risk the existence of the establishment itself, for the preservation of its buttresses? The Church has already lost much by the contest, and an obstinate adherence to the same false policy will certainly hasten its reformation, and perhaps (what moderate men have not wished) its final ruin.

If the Reviewer had proceeded so far in his argument, as to prove that the exclusion of sectaries from offices was in truth a necessary restriction to secure the Church of England, “the expediency of Queen Anne’s statute against occasional conformity \*” could not be disputed; but the  
legislature

\* The progress of this statute against occasional conformity, if detailed at length, would be a precious morsel of High Church history.

legislature itself, by the repeal of that act, has solemnly and authoritatively declared, that the in-

history. On the 8th of Mar. 1700, on the motion of Sir John Packington, leave was given for bringing in a bill "for the better preservation of the Protestant religion, and for preventing the translation of bishops from one see to another." This was supported by High Churchmen, with a view to weaken the power of the Court over the highest dignitaries of the Church, because it happened that the Bishops of those days were generally Whigs, and friendly to the revolution. The Bishops and the Dissenters were then on the same side in politics, and therefore the friends to the original scheme for the bill willingly consented to the addition of a clause, that "in case any person admitted to any office in England or Wales, should, at any time, whilst he was in office, frequent or go to any other place of divine worship than some of the places set apart for the service of the Church of England, his office should be thenceforth void." The bill, with this additional clause, was read a second time, and committed; and the committee was afterwards empowered to think of methods for augmenting small bishopricks. See Journals of the Commons, vol. xiii. p. 388, 501, 560. So many difficulties occurred in fixing upon a plan for augmenting the small bishopricks, that no further progress was made, and the bill dropped. King William died on the 8th of March, 1701, and the first parliament of Queen Anne met on the 20th of October, 1702. By the change of sovereigns the power to translate bishops was no longer a grievance to High Churchmen, but as the Dissenters still continued firm in their attachment to the principles of the Revolution, and determined to secure, if possible, the accession of the house of Hanover, the persecution was continued against them; and on the 4th of November, 1702, leave was given to bring in a bill, not "to prevent the translation of bishops," but "for preventing occasional conformity" only. Journals of the Commons, vol. xiv. p. 14. This was the origin of a bill, obstinately pressed upon the legislature by the High Church party, and at length carried into a law, after it had been rejected by the Lords no less than three times.



tention of imposing the sacramental test was not to exclude *all* Nonconformists from office, and that such total exclusion is not expedient. This observation is a sufficient answer to one, who thinks “ it  
 “ might ill become private citizens, without some  
 “ better authority than merely that of their own  
 “ judgments, to agitate a question which the legislature of the country hath *once* solemnly  
 “ decided;” but in justice to the Dissenters it deserves to be further discussed.

The Reviewer, in the threshold of his argument, makes a pretty bold assumption : “ That a Dissenter, whatever may be his integrity and piety,  
 “ whatever may be the grounds of his dissent,  
 “ is an unfit person to be entrusted with command, authority, and influence, in any state in  
 “ which the civil magistrate takes a particular  
 “ church under his protection, is an axiom in  
 “ politics, of which,” says he, “ it is hoped a regular proof is not at this time wanting\*.” The Reviewer deceives himself, if he supposes that this proposition, which is an axiom in politics in no other part of Europe, will be admitted as an axiom in English politics without proof. While the advocates, indeed, of the Church defended the establishment as the repository of truth, and persecuted Nonconformists for their error, no proof could have been necessary; but since they have abandoned those principles, which the Church retains, and support it upon the ground of *public*

\* Review, p. 14.

*utility* only, it is incumbent on them to make out this unfitness in Dissenters. In doing this, some of them may be surprized to find, in the result, that it is as easy to prove, upon the principles of High Churchmen, that Nonconformists should be burnt, as that they should be excluded from offices.

This axiom may be traced (with most of the arguments of High Churchmen) to Sacheverell. In his sermon, he says, "*as the English government can never be secure on any other principles, but strictly those of the Church of England, so I will be bold to say, where any part of it is trusted in persons of any other notions, they must be false to themselves, if they are true to their trusts; or, if they are true to their opinions and interests, must betray that government they are enemies to upon principle.*" Here it must be allowed, that the Doctor, assuming that passive obedience and non-resistance were the principles of the English government, had a right to the rest of his argument; for to *such a government* the Dissenters always had been, and I trust ever will be, enemies upon principle. But if I am to consider the Reviewer as a friend to those principles on which alone our present monarchical constitution can be defended (but which some passages in his book may occasion one to doubt of) *he* can have no right to use it. In truth, the tables are reversed, and the Dissenters hold those principles which secure the British government, while Churchmen must betray it, if they are true to the opinions

of their Church. I am not inclined to appeal from this judgment of Sacheverell.

Bishop Warburton, who appears disposed to give up the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, did not forget what Sacheverell had preached. He found, however, some difficulty in proving the unfitness of a class of men to be entrusted with power, whose political principles were precisely those on which alone the revolution, and our present civil government, can be justified, and was obliged at last to rest his proof of their unfitness, merely on the ill will he supposed them to bear to the established Church. But even the arrogance of Warburton stated this only as a position to be proved. Bishop Halifax has adopted nearly his words; but in the hands of the Reviewer it is become a *self-evident* proposition. If every assertion which has been made by one bishop, and repeated by another, is to become an *axiom* in politics, this country is not likely long to enjoy its present prosperity, for bishops have usually been miserable politicians.

Though regular proof of the above extraordinary position is not deemed to be wanting, the Reviewer graciously condescends to attempt it in this manner: " Ill will to the establishment must, in  
 " all governments, belong to the character of a  
 " Dissenter, if he be an honest man; and conse-  
 " quently every Nonconformist will be inclined to  
 " use any influence or authority, with which an im-  
 " politic government may entrust him, to advance  
 " his

“ his own sect in the popular esteem, and to in-  
 “ crease its numbers ; and, as a means to this end,  
 “ he will use all means that seem to himself fair and  
 “ honourable, to undermine the Church establish-  
 “ ed, if there is any hope that its fall may facilitate  
 “ the establishment of his own, or of some other  
 “ more congenial to his own \*.” And therefore,  
 “ he cannot but misuse” the power trusted to him,  
 and the harm that he may do, under the notion of  
 doing good, will be only so much the more, *the*  
*greater we suppose his virtues and abilities.* Upon  
 these *undeniable principles* the policy of a test law  
 is made to depend. Here the Reviewer makes  
 the hope of substituting one establishment for ano-  
 ther the sole spur † to this “ misuse of power.”  
 But the Dissenters have no general form of Church  
 discipline among them, and so can entertain no  
 wishes to establish any on the ruins of the Church,  
 and this I will prove from the Reviewer himself.  
 “ For of what higher value,” says he, “ would be  
 “ the praises of discordant sects, incapable of  
 “ bringing any strength to government as a Church,  
 “ because they hold all alliance of a Church with  
 “ government to be profane and antichristian. *This*  
 “ *is the very ground of their implacable animosity to*  
 “ *the present establishment,* inasmuch that could a  
 “ formulary of faith be composed, to which they  
 “ could all assent in every article ; a mode of  
 “ faith instituted, which they should unanimously

\* Review, p. 15.

† The seventh resolution of the clergy of the archdeaconry of  
 Chester is in the same strain.

“ approve ;

“ approve ; a form of Church government devised, which they should all desire to adopt ; yet from this best of all possible churches, were it once established, they would be still Dissenters \*.” If further proof should be required, it may be found in the history of the Dissenters, and in their conduct to each other.

The Reviewer indeed says, that “ amidst the perpetual struggles of the Church of England with her numerous enemies, those various sects which, with little good liking to each other, have *always*, however, been confederated † for her destruction,” &c. One might ask, where are these *numerous* enemies of the Church of England, and in what history are these *perpetual* struggles recorded ? As applied to the Protestant Dissenters, the assertion is as false as it is malicious ; and I defy the Reviewer to produce a single instance of such confederation since there was any toleration in England. The repeal of the test laws has been the sole object for which they have ever made an attempt to form any union, and that union has never been so nearly perfected, *as since the Reviewer wrote*. In short, during the course of more than a century, these implacable enemies have,

\* Review, p. 20.

† Peter Haddon, M. A. Vicar of Leeds, and fourteen of the clergy of the parish of Leeds, could not see “ the late alarming confederacy of denominations so widely distant from each other in some essentials of Christianity, in any other light, than as ultimately meaning a contest for power in the State.” Poor souls ! had they possessed the wisdom of the Reviewer, they might have known this confederacy had *always* existed.



upon *no one* occasion, shown ill will to the establishment, but on the contrary have *more than once* testified their affection and regard, as has even been publicly acknowledged. The general course of education among the Dissenters has been, to teach their youth to look towards the established Church with respect, and even affection, and instead of an enemy, to treat her as a friend and ally in the common cause of protestantism, against popery. Hence strong prejudices in favour of the Church, and perhaps unjust ones against the Catholics, still hang upon many of the Dissenters; but if their regard for the Church has been somewhat diminished of late, the conduct of its clergy may well account for it.

With respect to the conduct of the different sects of Dissenters to each other, it is most true that they consist of *discordant* sects; but they can differ from each other without the smallest animosity or ill will; for each allowing to others the liberty they claim for themselves, that difference creates no coolness or dislike, nor prevents them from uniting cordially with each other in pursuit of a general object. This the High Churchmen have at length discovered, to their great dismay, *hinc illæ lachrymæ*; hence the late violent storms raised by the bigotry and selfishness of priests. For *several years* together we have seen the utmost harmony prevail among the Dissenters, and a perfect unanimity in soliciting the removal of a grievance equally affecting them all.

None

None of the sects of Dissenters of the present day have any form of Church government, nor do they feel such a predilection for any, as to wish to substitute it for the present one. When Episcopacy and Presbyterianism were disputing which should be the established religion, and persecute the other, it is no wonder that there should be an implacable animosity between *them*; but since the descendants of the Presbyterians have given up their system of Church government, and become Independents in discipline, there is no room left for rivalry. The general principle of Dissenters of all denominations now is, that there should be a general toleration to all peaceable subjects, understanding by the word *toleration*, not merely an indulgence as to the exercise of public worship, but *religious liberty*; allowing to all peaceable subjects the full enjoyment of their own religious sentiments and forms, without the infliction of any penalties or disabilities for preferring them. And that this is not only their principle, but their practice, may be seen from their behaviour in the colony of Massachusetts-bay, where they had the civil power in their own hands. Every man there is not only permitted to worship God in his own way, but all incapacities on account of religious tenets are unknown. The Dissenters in England have been well inclined to the established religion, and cheerfully contributed to its support. This they did without foreseeing, as the Reviewer ungenerously insinuates, that “ its ruin  
“ would be the means of setting up another, from  
“ which

“ which their party would meet with less indulgence \*.” Though it appears from the Reviewer, that “ their chieftains had piped” *in vain* “ on the hills,” for many years †, yet numerous have been the converts made against the policy of establishments in general, by Churchmen themselves, in the short space of a few months. The illiberal treatment which the Dissenters have met with, has occasioned an enquiry into the principles of those, who have so violently opposed the claims of justice; and in the doctrines of the church herself they discover the source whence flows the stream of bigotry and narrow-mindedness among her sons.

High Churchmen support their claim to exclude Dissenters from offices in the following manner:—It is just, say they, in a government, to incapacitate

\* Review, p. 14.

† It seems that Dr. Priestley and Mr. Robinson are unfriendly to civil establishments of religion. Review, p. 30, 31.—Mr. Robinson’s plan of Lectures there alluded to, purports to have been approved by the eastern association at Harlow in 1778. This approbation, which so much terrified the Reviewer, and was honoured with mention by Mr. Burke, was given by a few ministers among the Baptists only, meeting at Harlow in Essex. The bulk of the Nonconformists, so far from being the disciples of Mr. Robinson, had most probably *never seen his work*, or even *heard of the Eastern Association*, invidiously dignified by the Reviewer with the appellation of the Harlow Synod, until they were honoured with notice in the legislature. Mr. Robinson, in his preface to the fifth edition of his Plan of Lectures, printed in 1781, says, “ This little piece was written “ without any malevolent design, about three years ago, *for the* “ *use of a few associated churches*, and, *by their desire*, to avoid “ the trouble of transcribing, it was printed; but it was not then

citate those persons from the enjoyment of public offices, who do not conform to the established Church, because they *may be inclined* to use their influence, as far as is fair and justifiable, to increase the popularity and numbers of their sects. It has been a mean and timid maxim of some tyrannical governments, to punish men because it was *apprehended* they *might* do some harm, making the punishment precede the proof of guilt; and if the maxim went upon this principle, that a Dissenter was a bad man, and must make an unfair use of the influence of office, precedents might be found to justify their incapacitation. But the whole body of priests cannot produce in history a single instance of the exclusion of honest men, merely because they *might be inclined* to use their influence fairly, in pursuit of an *honest* purpose, for such the Reviewer's hypothesis assumes it to be. Equality is the just foundation of all government, and no partial advantages should be given, or partial restraints laid, or continued (not now adverting to their nature or object) except such as *the existing* government may deem expedient for the general good. But the power of making and altering laws, which descends from the existing legislators to their successors, necessarily implies that the laws made by their predecessors

*"published, nor was it intended to be published afterwards, because,"* &c.—Mr. William Smith, a Dissenter, and Member of Parliament, declared in the debate, (1790) that till that day he had *never seen* this publication; and though he had lived for five years within two miles of Harlow, he had *never heard* of any such meeting there.

may be changed or altered, as circumstances require; and it would be both frivolous and unjust for the persons in whom the legislative power for the moment resides, to ordain, that any particular law made by them should be *perpetual*. They can judge only of the propriety of the law at the time of making it, and they neither ought nor can prevent those who succeed them also from exercising their judgment, and altering it, whenever required for the good of their country. Hence the oath imposed on the nonconforming ministers by the Five Mile Act, viz. that they should not attempt any alteration in government in Church or State\*; and the attempt made afterwards to bind all public officers, privy counsellors, and members of parliament, by a similar engagement, were unjust and tyrannical. But it would be less unjust to force a Dissenter to swear that he would not attempt any alterations in the established Church, than to

\* The clergy introduced this ingenious device to protect their Church, in the canons made in 1640, and thereby all persons ecclesiastical, and all persons taking degrees at the universities, were bound to take an oath, that they approved "the doctrine and discipline, or government, established in the Church of England," and would not consent to alter the government of it. After the Restoration the following oath, alluded to in the text, was imposed on the Nonconformist Ministers.

"I, A. B. do swear, that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king, and that I do abhor that traiterous position of taking arms, by his authority, against his person, or against those that are commissioned by him, in pursuance of such commission; and *that I will not, at any time, endeavour any alteration of government, either in Church or State.*"

lay



lay him under penal restrictions, merely from the apprehension that he might be inclined to attempt it. It must be competent for every subject to lay his own personal grievances before the legislature, and point out the injurious effect of any law under which he suffers.

But if penal restrictions were even justifiable in this case, they ought to extend equally to all persons, and all laws, and not to be confined to one class of subjects, in order to give an undue preference to another. When taxes were imposed on callicoes and shops, it was never proposed to incapacitate all callico-printers and shop-keepers, because they might be inclined to exert their influence for redress of the oppression; when the bills for laying an excise on tobacco, and for letting to farm the duties upon post horses, were before the House of Commons, did any member move, that all those who opposed them within doors should be excluded from office, lest by their influence the nation might, at some future time, be convinced of the impolicy of continuing them? In short, the consequence of this principle would carry us to a frightful extent. If it is conceded, that the legislature may, to secure *any one* law, exclude from office all those who opposed it, it may extend the same security to *all*. It may go still further, and not rest the security of its laws upon an exclusion from offices only, but may suppress every civil right of those who are suspected of disaffection. They may be forbid to possess land, or property of any sort, as being accompanied with influence.

They

They may be abridged of liberty, and perhaps, at a favourable opportunity, some merciful ecclesiastic may recommend the cutting out of tongues, and the lopping off of hands, that all the means of persuasion may be extinguished.

As an *argumentum ad hominem* against High Churchmen, it may be observed, that if the *undeniable* principle on which the policy of a test is founded, is that a preference cannot but be given by every man to the sect to which he himself belongs, and that a Dissenter must bear ill-will to an establishment, it necessarily follows, that the establishment must also bear ill-will to Dissenters; and thus the Church is contending for a monopoly of offices, for the avowed purpose of keeping down all the other sects, against which it is confessed by the hypothesis, that *she feels* ill-will and animosity. It is hard and unjust then upon the Dissenters, that this influence, of whatever sort, so much prized by those who are in possession, should be kept from them, for the avowed purpose of using it to their prejudice. Indeed, upon the Reviewer's principle, there must be a plentiful portion of ill-will among the subjects of every country, in which there is an establishment; for Nonconformists must, *according to him*, be the implacable enemies of the Church, which must return that enmity to Nonconformists. And not only toleration, but the public peace, must be always in a precarious situation, where so much is dreaded for the establishment.

In one word, where the state has selected and established that sect, which is approved of by the majority of the people, or which, by the fitness of its internal form of church government is best fitted to unite with the civil constitution (as the Reviewer would say) and has provided for the maintenance of its clergy, it is the duty of the civil power to take all the other sects under its protection, and to defend them, as well from the incroachments of each other, as from the usurpations of the established one. Against an establishment so constituted, those, not included in it, would have no motive for ill-will. In all great questions within the jurisdiction of the civil government (and this we assume to be one) the majority must decide, and the minority submit. It often happens that the people are divided in opinion upon public measures, and it would be as reasonable, for instance, to incapacitate all the friends to a reform of parliament, as the Dissenters. If the latter must necessarily be dissatisfied, and inclined to undermine the Church, the former must necessarily be disposed to use the influence and authority "impolitically intrusted" with them, to undermine the civil constitution. They have both applied to parliament for an alteration of the laws, or, some may say, an amendment of the constitution, and both without success; and there is nothing criminal in endeavouring by argument to change the opinions of our legislators, to whom at last these questions must be again referred. This is what every state must necessarily be liable to, and is no more to be complained

plained of in this instance, than where the reform of any merely civil corporation is in view. High Churchmen, indeed, artfully cast a veil of sanctity over the Church \*, and to examine the truth of its doctrines, or the propriety of its discipline, has been treated as sacrilege. But the triumphs of priestcraft are nearly over in this country, and those doctrines and that discipline are now openly discussed and controverted. The Dissenters in general, so far from bearing ill-will to the establishment *as such*, admit its *utility* † as a mere human institution, on the whole well calculated for the instruc-

\* The Common Council of London, in their Resolutions of the 25th of February, 1790, inclosed both the *Church and State* in the mantle of sanctity, and spoke “ of our *sacred* constitution in Church and State,”

† Bishop Warburton, Bishop Halifax, Archdeacon Paley, and in general all the modern defenders of the established Church, have rested its right to a preference solely on its *civil utility*. The Dissenters in general have not been inclined to controvert thus much of their argument in its favour, having no system of Church discipline to set up in its room, and conceiving highly of the beneficial influence of the instructions of its clergy on the minds of the people. But the best institutions are liable to be perverted; and whenever, upon the whole, an establishment is so conducted, as to do more mischief by introducing narrow bigotted notions *in religion*, destructive of that charity which it ought to inculcate, and principles *in politics* inimical to that civil constitution of government, which has given it a preference, than it does good in the immediate object of its institution, it ceases, as Churchmen admit, to be *useful*, and forfeits all claim to public confidence and favour.

tion of the people in the principles of morality and religion. But they join with many of the most respectable members of the Church itself, in the wish to see it reformed and improved, particularly in what relates to civil and religious liberty. How the wishing for the improvement of the established Church can be a bearing of ill-will to it, remains for High Churchmen to discover.

The Reveiwer gives us a comparifon between *faftions* and *religious feuds*, both of which, he wifely concludes, are original fins in particular circumftances. How happy this allufion! How sharp-fighted this politician! So far are what he calls *faftions* (that is, the union of fmall bodies of individuals, jealous of the conduct of the governing power) from being the remains of evils, that they form the watchmen of the ftate, and beft prefervatives of the liberties of a country. To abufe power is a failing of humanity, and the more vigilant the governed, the more correct the conduct of the governors. *Religious feuds*, or, as I would call them, religious *differences*, are not the remains of the fame caufe, much lefs of the fame evils, but the neceffary confequence of every man being permitted to think for himfelf in matters of religion. A variety of opinions will arife, and thofe who think alike will affociate, and worship God together; but fo far from being injurious, it is highly beneficial to religion that its doctrines fhould be contrafted and difcuffed. High Churchmen alone, who  
prefer



prefer the interests of their sect or party to those of religion, would wish to damp the spirit of enquiry, and vilify the exercise of the noblest faculty of man, with the opprobrious epithet of *an evil, and a symptom of original sin*. To *factions*, as the Reviewer insidiously stiles them, England owes her liberty; and to *religious feuds*, as they are called, all the moderation that Churchmen possess. God forbid then that High Churchmen should ever expel such *evils*, when liberty and toleration must probably be the companions of their retreat.

The Reviewer terminates his consideration of the claim of the Dissenters on the justice of their country with an observation, which cannot be too strongly reprobated. "The exclusions, however," says he, "of the Corporation and the Test Acts hardly amount to incapacities, because they declare no incapacities, but such which the individual hath *in his own power, at any time, to efface* \*." Gracious heaven! can such detestable language be ascribed to a holy prelate, to the teacher of a religion, for which every other sect is to be humbled? Is conscience moulded at our will, and are its dictates within our power? Would it not be an insult to tell a man, excluded by his poverty from sitting in parliament, that his exclusion hardly amounted to an incapacity, because he had it *in his own power at any time to efface it*, by buying a sufficient estate? The pious mind is struck with horror

\* Review, p. 27.

at the introduction of the same abominable position into the resolutions of the *holy fathers* of the arch-deaconry of York. They declared, "that the complaint urged by the Dissenters, of being incapacitated for offices of trust, honour, and emolument, is unfounded and unjust; this incapacity arising from *their own voluntary separation* from our establishment, to which they were previously aware that such offices were *exclusively* annexed." Lamentable indeed must be the relaxed system of morality, which can dictate such sentiments! If the Dissenters were possessed of the same politic pliability, which has disgraced too many of the established clergy, and like them could swear allegiance to a king, and then preach principles \* subversive of his right to the

\* Sir Simon Harcourt, as counsel for Sacheverell before the House of Lords, described the situation of his client in the following strong expressions:—"What evidence will your lordships expect he should produce to clear himself? He has shewn his submission to the Revolution, from the first moment his years made him capable of doing so. He has given all the public testimonies of his fidelity and affection to the last reign, as well as the present, which the government has at any time required from the most suspected persons. He has taken the oath of allegiance, signed the association, and took the association. *'Tis a miserable case any man is in*, if, after he has taken the abjuration, the utmost which is required, he shall still be told, he hath indeed abjured the Pretender, but hath *not yet forgot him.*" In that miserable case, however, was Sacheverell, and the sentence of the House of Lords told him in pretty strong terms, that though he had *abjured* the Pretender, he had not yet *forgot* him.

crown,

crown\*, it is most true, that they needed not to have solicited a repeal of the test laws, for each individual might, *at any time*, have effaced the incapacity.

Behold here the fatal effects of a relaxed education, and of teaching in our universities, that the most solemn engagements are but forms. When a youth of twelve years of age is entered of the university of Oxford, he is obliged to subscribe his unfeigned assent and consent to the thirty-nine articles; articles which he had probably never read, or which, if he had read, he could not possibly understand; and this too, when he is not supposed to be of sufficient age even to acknowledge the king's supremacy (which, to make the absurdity complete, is *contained in one of them*) or to give the security of an oath, that he will obey the statutes of the university; for thus runs the statute:—"Quotquot autem in matriculam  
 " universitatis redigendi accedunt, si *decimum sextum*  
 " *sue ætatis annum attigerint, articulis fidei & reli-*  
 " *gionis subscribant, & de agnoscendo primatu regię*  
 " *majestatis; nec non de fidelitate universitati exhibendâ;*  
 " statutis, privilegiis, & consuetudinibus ejusdem

\* In 1692, Bishop Burnet says, " And it must be confessed  
 " that the behaviour of *many clergymen* gave atheists a great ad-  
 " vantage: they had taken the oaths, and read the prayers for  
 " the present government; they observed the orders for public  
 " fasts and thanksgivings; and yet they shewed in many places  
 " their aversion to our establishment but too visibly.—This made  
 " many conclude, that the clergy were a sort of men, that would  
 " *swear and pray, even against their consciences*, rather than  
 " lose their benefices; and by consequence that they were go-  
 " verned by interest, and not by principle." History of his  
 " own Times, vol. ii. p. 101.

“ observandis juxta formam hæcenus usitatam, cor-  
 “ porale juramentum præstent. Quod si *infra de-*  
 “ *cimum sextum & supra duodecim ætatis annum exti-*  
 “ *terint, articulis fidei & religionis duntaxat subscri-*  
 “ *bent, & in matriculam redigentur. Quod si*  
 “ *duodecim non excesserint, in matriculam dun-*  
 “ *taxat referentur,*” &c.

At the university of Cambridge, where they have, in the course of ages, discovered that even batchelors of arts are not capable of understanding the thirty-nine articles, such subscription is not imposed at admission; but the sanction of an oath is trifled with in a most shocking manner. The oath taken on matriculation; by an old statute, made in 1544, is in these words:—“ Cancellario procancellario-  
 “ que academix Cantabrigiensis, quatenus jus  
 “ fasque est et pro ordine in quo fuerim, quamdiu  
 “ in hac republica degam, comiter obtemperabo:  
 “ leges, statuta, mores approbatos, et privilegia  
 “ Cantabrigiensis academix (quantum in me est)  
 “ observabo: *pietatis & bonarum literarum pro-*  
 “ *gressum, et hujus academix statum, honorem, digni-*  
 “ *tatem tuebor QUOAD VIVAM, meoque suffragio &*  
 “ *consilio rogatus et non rogatus defendam;* ita me  
 “ Deus adjuvet, & sancta ejus evangelia.”—In 1647, the following grace was passed: “ Placet  
 “ vobis, ut *in majorem posterum cautelam jurantium &*  
 “ *levamen, hæc verba sint annexa juramenti acade-*  
 “ *mix matriculationis, admissionis, creationis:* Se-  
 “ *natus Cantabrigiensis decrevit & declaravit eos*  
 “ *omnes, qui monitionibus, correctionibus, multis &*  
 “ *pænis statutorum, legum, decretorum, ordina-*  
 “ *tionum,*

“ tionum, injunctorum, & laudabilium consuetu-  
 “ dinum hujus academix, transgressoribus quovis  
 “ modo incumbentibus, *humiliter se submiserint, nec*  
 “ *esse, nec habendos esse perjurii reos.*”

And, with this strange declaration annexed, the oath abovementioned has been taken ever since. These teachers of morality begin their course of education, by first forcing their pupils to take an oath, couched in terms which they do not expect should be ever kept, and then relieve them from all apprehensions on the score of perjury, by annexing a salvo, that if they perform *a part only* of what they have sworn to perform in the whole, *their rulers at Cambridge* will not say they are perjured ! Laymen pursued a more dignified and moral line of conduct at the Revolution ; they altered the oath imposed by the Act of Uniformity, by wholly omitting the clause that declared it unlawful to bear arms, in any case, against the king ; not by tacking a salvo, that those who took the oath, and broke that part of it, “ *nec esse nec habendos esse perjurii reos.* ” — “ Youth is the great opportunity of life,  
 “ which settleth and fixeth most men either in a  
 “ good or bad course ; and the impressions, espe-  
 “ cially bad impressions, then made, are usually  
 “ lasting. Youth is also a time of innocence,  
 “ when men have horror for vice, which they  
 “ never commit at first, without offering violence  
 “ to themselves. The first and most natural  
 “ thoughts of man are to be honest and just, and  
 “ reasonable, as the best things he can do for his  
 “ own sake ; and it is the influence of ill example,  
 “ and



“ and of the common practice of the world,  
 “ which, for the most part, changes his sentiments;  
 “ and puts him upon ill actions. But the natural  
 “ innocence of youth being once broken in upon,  
 “ man by degrees grows hardened and impudent  
 “ in wickedness, and commits it without shame or  
 “ remorse. Nothing, therefore, has so direct a ten-  
 “ dency to debauch the *world*, as to debauch the  
 “ *youth*; and the earlier, the more effectual; for  
 “ thereby innocence and virtue may be so effaced,  
 “ as in a little time to leave no memory or trace of  
 “ them, no more than Quartilla in Petronius Ar-  
 “ biter had, who, though a young woman, *did not*  
 “ *remember that she had ever been a maid*\*.”

\* Independent Whig, vol. i. p. 135.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The arbitrary Principles on which the Test Laws are defended, stated and answered; and the Protestant Dissenters shewn to be loyal and peaceable Subjects.*

THE main ground on which the present test laws are defended, is contained in the third resolution of the clergy of London, assembled at Sion College, couched in the following general terms, viz. “ That every civil society has a perfect right, “ inherent in itself, to *prescribe the terms on which* “ *its members shall be admitted to places of trust and* “ *power*; and consequently, that no individual can “ have a right inconsistent with that public right \*.” In general let us admit the proposition to be true; but may we ask these grey-bearded politicians, whether a civil society has a right to prescribe, as the terms on which its subjects shall be (not *admitted* but) *capable to be* admitted into places of trust, that they shall each give up his right of self-preservation in cases of extreme danger; his right to resist the tyranny of governors (as was exacted in Charles the Second’s reign by Churchmen) or, which is the corner-stone of the claim of the Dis-

\* See resolutions of the county of Warwick, of Manchester, Gloucester, &c. to the same import.

senters, his right to worship God in the way he thinks will be most acceptable. If they cannot answer in the affirmative, their resolution does not reach the case of the Dissenters. The same principle operates on the minds of High Churchmen, in their defence of the sacramental test, as governed the conduct of Nebuchadnezzar when he set up his golden image. In one case it was required, that persons *in office* should fall down and worship the false God which he had set up; in the other it is required that they shall worship the true God in a way which they conceive to be unacceptable to him. The only difference lies in this: that, in England, a refusal to comply with the unjust decree is punished with a brand of infamy; in Babylon, it conducted the offenders to the fiery furnace.

Mr. Burke, in his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, countenances this error, when treating of the rights of men in society, he says, they “are  
 “ *their advantages*; and these rights are often in  
 “ balances between differences of good, in com-  
 “ promises sometimes between good and evil, and  
 “ sometimes between evil and evil. Political reason  
 “ is a computing principle, adding, subtracting,  
 “ multiplying, and dividing morally, and not me-  
 “ taphysically or mathematically, true moral deno-  
 “ minations.” From this sublime passage I collect, that when man enters into society, and becomes a civil social being, all the direct original rights which he enjoyed in a state of nature are destroyed, and *he has no rights left but the advantages*  
 I for

*for which civil society was formed* \*. The argument must amount to this, or it amounts to nothing, for we need not be told, that a man has a right to the advantages for which civil society was formed; and the only question is, whether in the social state he does still reserve to himself some rights, which governors can neither compromise nor balance.

The primary object of every government ought to be the security of the persons and property of those individuals who submit to it. In order to effect this, every man brings into the aggregate stock certain rights, which he possessed in a state of nature, but he brings them subject to the same restrictions under which he exercised them in that state; and these rights, so restricted, may be modified and arranged by the society so as best to promote the great object of the union. For example, in a state of nature, every man defended himself from injury by his own powers; he was himself the judge how far he should punish the offender, and his own hands inflicted the punishment; but when he enters into society he gives up those rights; the general defence is then intrusted to persons selected for that purpose; judges are appointed to examine into criminal charges, and apportion the punishments, and their sentences are carried into execution by the offi-

\* "To close all," says Mr. Burke, in a subsequent publication, "the *pretended* rights of man, which have made this havoc, *cannot* be the rights of the people; for to be a people, and *to have these rights*, are things impossible: the one supposes *the presence*, the other the *absence*, of a state of civil society." Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, p. 139.

cers of the public. In this manner the happiness of each individual is much advanced, his person and property better secured from violence, and justice more impartially administered, and more certainly executed. His right, in common with others, to be protected by the community, is not therefore a civil right, arising merely out of the social state, for it sprung out of, and is co-extensive with, those natural rights which he originally surrendered.

But when man enters into society, he is not stripped of *all* the rights which he enjoyed in a state of nature. Thus his right of self-defence, as Mr. Burke acknowledges, is necessarily and unalienably attached to the person of the individual, and though sometimes dormant, is never destroyed. And the Revolution is another glorious proof that Englishmen have other rights, besides the *advantages* for which society was formed; for the right to resist a tyrannical government certainly never could be surrendered to society, or dependent on its institutions; still less could it be an *advantage* derived from it, being itself the ultimate security of all its advantages. The exercise of it is inconsistent with the existence of government, and can be justified only on the supposition that the governing powers are forfeited and gone. This important right Mr. Burke, not indeed very consistently, admits was *gravely* and *decorously* vindicated by the people of England at the Revolution. In like manner, the right of every man to worship God in his own way could not be given up when he became



became incorporated in society, and the rights of the society cannot be more extensive than the aggregate of those which were surrendered by the individuals; consequently the governing power could never claim any jurisdiction over the opinions of its subjects, or punish or *restrain* them in any manner, or on any pretence whatever. The right of private judgment does not spring out of, and is not in the smallest degree affected by, the civil institutions of society, but remains to *social* man, in the strictest sense, a *natural* right, which cannot be alienated, or admit of compromise, with either good or evil. In a state of society, as well as in a state of nature, the individual must be in the *constant exercise* of it; and in this respect it differs from the right of self-preservation, which in a state of society revives only when the magistrate cannot afford protection to the individual; and from the right of resistance, which lies dormant, until through the misconduct of the governing power, the objects for which the individuals associated can be no longer attained.

Having advanced thus far in the argument, it will not be difficult to detect the fallacy of the following resolution of the clergy of the archdeaconry of Chester, viz. that, “to insist upon natural claims to civil offices, is to advance a palpable absurdity; because no member of any society can have any civil rights, except such are conveyed to him by the laws of that society.” It seems then, according to these clerical politicians, that at the instant when a man enters into society, like a snake that sloughs off its skin, he becomes a  
new

new creature ; he is changed from a solitary into a social being, and all those rights which he had in a state of nature being destroyed, he acquires other new ones, which have no connection with those he enjoyed before.

I admit that no man has a natural claim to any *particular* office ; because being made up of the surrendered rights of many individuals besides himself, they all would have as good a claim to it as he ; but this is not a fair statement of the question ; for the claim of the Dissenters extends to a *capacity* only to hold those, to which the magistrate, or his fellow citizens, in whom the power of filling them is vested, may think fit to nominate them. Now, as religious opinions fall not under the jurisdiction of the civil government, they can make men neither fit nor unfit to occupy public civil employments ; and therefore ought not to be considered in the distribution of them.

Before the individual entered into society, he was his own soldier, his own lawgiver, and his own judge ; and he never intended to incapacitate himself, or, in other words, to give up the government of himself and his concerns, *wholly* out of his own controul. In consequence of what he had surrendered, he stood upon an equal footing with others, who had given up no more ; and the right which he had placed in the common stock, that it might be exercised in the best manner, for his own advantage, he expected to be impartially delegated back to him, along with the rights of others, whenever he should be thought, by the proper judges,

judges, qualified to exercise them. The distribution of offices is not a distribution of *favours*, depending on the mere discretion or caprice of the magistrate: every member of the society has an interest in them, and has contributed something towards them; they are partnership concerns; and though they are moulded into their present forms by civil society, they are composed, like the state itself, of an aggregate of *natural* rights. Every man therefore has a *natural* claim, not to any particular office, but to a capacity to hold one, when he shall be thought qualified to fill it, whatever his religious opinions may be; and if he is disqualified, for those opinions by the laws of the state, he is unjustly treated.

I will agree therefore with Mr. Burke, that no individual has any direct original right to any specific share of power and direction in the management of the state, for as he admits, civil society is the offspring of convention, and that convention must be founded on equality and justice. But every individual, who gave up his direct original right to govern himself, must be entitled to the advantages he has stipulated for in return, and unless it can be shewn that the convention upon which our government depends, contains different terms for Churchmen and Dissenters, and, in short, is neither equal nor just, the whole body of the Dissenters ought not to be excluded by a *general* incapacitation, from all share whatever in the government.

But there is another form in which this argument has been pressed by High Churchmen. In substance the Reviewer puts it thus, that where a government is a just one, both in its principles and execution, and where religious ordinances are not profaned, nor the individual persecuted for conscience sake, *self-preservation is the leading principle, which must govern the morality of the state, and no claims of any of its subjects can be just and equitable, which are contrary to the state's security.* There is more of the politician than the moralist in the manner of introducing the proposition, and the terms in which it is conveyed seem to be wilfully obscured \*. Here the Reviewer assumes, what the Dissenters certainly will not admit, that in consequence of these laws no religious ordinance is profaned †, and no individual *persecuted* for con-

\* Review, p. 5.

† How admirable the consistency of High Churchmen ! While the act against occasional conformity was in force, the horrid profanation of an holy ordinance was their constant cry ; so represented *the Lower House of Convocation* in 1704 ; so preached *Sacheverell*, and so argued *Sherlock* : but *their* object was to retain the act against occasional conformity, and exclude Dissenters *wholly* from offices. *Now*, the act against occasional conformity having been repealed, so far from being a profanation, a perversion, a grievance, or an evil, it is a *just, sufficient, expedient, salutary, wise, and necessary* provision for preservation of the public peace, the *grand security* of our present civil and ecclesiastical constitution ; and the people of Manchester and its neighbourhood “ approve and admire the *wisdom of their ancestors*, in enacting the receiving the sacrament of the Lord’s “ Supper, according to the usage of the Church of England, as a “ *sufficient test* and *effectual safeguard* to their happy constitution “ in Church and State.”

science

science sake ; and he assumes also, what the Dissenters will as certainly deny, that their claims are contrary to the state's security, and that the government is justly administered, which lays them under this restraint.

This proposition, apparently so guarded as to be in itself perfectly harmless, is yet so ingeniously applied as to defend every species of injustice in the execution of government. And what the Reviewer only craftily insinuates, other High Churchmen, more honest, but less wily, have not scrupled to avow. For at a meeting of the clergy of the archdeaconry of Chester, held on the 15th of February, 1790, the Reverend Archdeacon Travis in the chair, it was resolved :

I. " That every state hath an inherent right to  
 " require evidence of the opinions of those whom  
 " it shall employ in its offices of trust and power,  
 " whether they are friendly or hostile to the constitution which it hath established ; and that this  
 " right arises not merely from the laws which may  
 " have been enacted by that state, but *from that*  
 " *principle of self-preservation* which belongs to  
 " communities, as well as to individuals, and which  
 " is *antecedent and superior to all law*.

II. " That *upon the same principle*, every state  
 " hath a right to declare, what shall be deemed a  
 " sufficient proof or test, whether such opinions are  
 " or are not friendly to its establishments."

Here it seems to have been taken for granted, that the right of self-preservation, belonging to communities is only co-extensive with the self-preser-



vation, belonging to individuals, and, in that case, it would be a sufficient answer to say, that self-preservation could never give to one individual a right to enquire into, or restrain, or punish, the religious opinions of another ; for the rights of the society, in other words the aggregate of surrendered rights, can never amount to more than those which were surrendered. Self-preservation may now become in extreme cases the ruling principle of the community, as it was before of each of the individuals who composed it, but it can be carried no further than the individual might have carried it; and as he could neither punish nor *restrain*, nor require evidence of religious opinions, for self-preservation, so neither can the state. But if these clerical politicians should contend, that the principle of self-preservation is not to be confined within *any limits*, it then follows, that every species of injustice and wickedness is justifiable for the preservation of the state, or its laws ; and, if justifiable, must be submitted to by its subjects. Upon such a principle the worst government on earth must be allowed to endure for ever. Men indeed are naturally inclined to submit patiently and *long* to oppressive governments ; and nothing short of a *necessity*, real or imaginary, can impel them to resistance. When therefore a government is become weak and inefficient, through the errors or vices of those who have administered it, the supposed preservation of the state, or in other words, of *power*, necessarily leads to the oppression of its subjects ; and the more weak and inefficient, the more must they be oppressed, to make them peaceably

peaceably submit. Transport to Turkey the reverend clergy of the archdeaconry of Chester, and put Archdeacon Travis in the chair, and they may resolve, upon the principle of self-preservation so understood, that the professors of Christianity are not worthy to lick the dust from the feet of the disciples of Mahomet, and that the property and lives of millions of people ought to depend on the caprice of a tyrant. Place them in Dahomey, and they may resolve that the monster, clothed in the garb of sovereignty, who there delights in the miseries of his subjects, has a right to shed their blood in honour to his gods, and ornament his palace with their skulls.

The *reasons* given by the High Church party for laying the restraints complained of on the Protestant Dissenters, partake of the same arbitrary spirit which we have seen to govern the arguments, by which they maintain their *right* to impose them. It is said, that Dissenters ought to be excluded from offices, because they must necessarily “ mis-  
“ use” power, if they were possessed of it, being *disloyal subjects, and enemies to the public peace in Church and State.*

In defiance of the wise and liberal resolution of the corporation of Leicester, “ That all the Dissen-  
“ ters urge respecting their loyalty to their king,  
“ and their attachment to the state, is *insignificant*,  
“ because no state does, or can, reward its subjects  
“ for obedience; and that all the Dissenters urge  
“ respecting

“ respecting their own moderation is *absurd*, because no men give themselves bad characters,” I will venture, in answer to this charge, to recall the attention of my readers to a few historical facts. In the reign of Charles II. at the very time when the Test Act was passed, the Dissenters were ranked among the zealous assertors of the Protestant religion and the liberties of their country; they were then esteemed sincere friends to the public peace in Church and State, by those who best knew their temper and principles, and the dangers meant to be guarded against by the law they had themselves made. From the time of passing the Test Act till the abdication of the last unfortunate prince of the House of Stuart, the Dissenters were not less distinguished for their steady opposition to the tyrannical measures of the Court, than since that time for their zealous attachment to the constitution, as settled at the Revolution. Enemies to kings who claimed a delegation from God to oppress mankind, they have cheerfully hazarded their lives to support a race of monarchs, seated on the throne by the voice of the people. Such conduct cannot justly convey suspicions of disloyalty to a monarch of that race. When passive obedience and non-resistance were the avowed doctrines, not only of the Church, but of its clergy also, they suffered persecution for holding those principles on which the Revolution was afterwards founded. From that great æra, when the rights of mankind were vindicated against a tyrant, and the people of England dared to assert their freedom, to the present moment, not  
a single

a single instance can be pointed out, in which their loyalty to the monarch on the throne, or their affection to the government, can be justly called in question. Nay, in two instances happening very recently before this charge was made, they had signally manifested their attachment to the *prerogatives of the crown*, and, as some conceived, had in so doing betrayed the rights of the people.

But we are told that by the repeal of the Test Act, the influence of the Dissenters “ will be increased, while their prejudices will remain entire. Their prejudices will incite them to use their increased influence, first for the reformation of religion, and then, *since their politics are for the most part singular*, for the bettering of the state. Government will have thrown down *the best barrier it had to oppose to innovation*, and the work of reformation will go on, without obstruction, till one stone will not be left standing upon another, of the admired fabric of the British constitution\*.” The politics of the Dissenters, which appear thus *singular* in the eyes of High Churchmen, are neither more nor less than those which were honoured with the sanction of Mr. Locke, Lord Somers, and those Whigs who accomplished the Revolution: and the only bettering of the state, which *some of them* wish for, is a reform in the representation of the people in the House of Commons!

The Reviewer’s prognostication of the ruin of our civil government, as the *necessary* consequence

\* Review, p. 59.

of the repeal of the Test Laws, I confess struck me with admiration. But recollecting that most of the arguments of our modern High Churchmen, however new the dress in which they are produced, may be traced back to the times when passive obedience and non-resistance triumphed in the State as well as the Church, and the persecution of sectaries was generally practised, as well as established, and have been handed down in regular succession, through Parker, Sacheverell, Sherlock, and Warburton, I referred back to ancient authorities : and the following extract from Sacheverell's sermon, will fully explain the corresponding passage in the Review. " Whosoever presumes to innovate, alter, or misrepresent any point in the " articles of the faith of the Church, ought to be " arraigned as a traitor to our State : *heterodoxy in* " *the doctrines of the one naturally producing, and al-* " *most necessarily inferring, rebellion and high treason* " *in the other* \*." The reader will please also to observe the happy coincidence of sentiment manifested in this passage and the remark of the Reviewer in another place, that " too much reason " was given to suspect, that *the principles of a* " *Nonconformist in religion, and a republican in po-* " *litics, were inseparately connected!*" In the race of bigotry then, may the Reviewer contend for the prize with SACHEVERELL : for SHERLOCK was ashamed of what he wrote, and WARBURTON could be sometimes candid.

\* Review, p. 29.



The Reviewer proceeds to tell us, that the actual feelings of the individual Nonconformists of the present times are such, that they “ might pass for a “ loyal body, friends to the public peace;” but that the disposition of their “ leaders” make up the whole character of the party, and Dr. Price (who alone is cited in this place) has unfortunately shewn such an impassioned fondness for the democratic form, as is inconsistent with genuine loyalty to any king, or attachment to any government, but a mere democracy, and “ places the glory of “ the American states in their emancipation from “ *lords, from bishops, and from kings*; and their leaders” (who are not named) “are used to treat the “ subject of civil liberty in a manner that hath given “ too much reason to suspect that the principles “ of a Nonconformist in religion, and a republican “ in politics, are *inseparably* united \*.” It is impossible, without making longer extracts than my plan will allow, to convey to the reader a true idea of the malignant insinuations † in which the argument is dressed up, or the parade and ostentation with which sentence is passed on the whole body of Nonconformists; who, upon the evidence of this extract from the works of Dr. Price only,

\* P. 28, &c.

† Yet Mr. Madan has cited with approbation no less than five pages of them, in his letter to Dr. Priestley! Well might Archbishop Tillotson say to a scrupulous Doctor of his province, “ Doctor, Doctor! *charity* is above *rubrics*.” But where are our *Tillotsons* now?

are adjudged guilty of favouring a democratic form of government.

The admission, that the Nonconformists of the present time *might pass* for a loyal body, might have been couched in more handsome terms, though the concession, wrested from a High Churchman *in any terms*, ought not to be despised. But if the individual Nonconformists do constitute a loyal body, it rests with the Reviewer to shew, that they ever were connected together for any party views, and what the character of that party was, and then that Dr. Price (who alone is named in this passage) was really its leader, before his writings can be cited to prove what the principles of the individual Nonconformists may possibly be *hereafter*, but certainly were not, as the Reviewer himself allows, when he wrote. The truth is, that it does not seem decided among High Churchmen which will best suit their argument, that the Nonconformists should, or should not, be considered as a *party* regularly formed. And therefore, with admirable consistency, the Reviewer sometimes honours them with the appellation of "*the party*," and sometimes denies them to be one; thus in one place he even says, that they have *always* been "firmly confederated" for the destruction of the established Church; and yet we learn in another, that they are discordant sects, *incapable of uniting* with one another: in short, sometimes it is "very like an ouzle," sometimes "very like a whale." The Nonconformists certainly have had no general bond of union, but that  
which

which arises from mutual oppression and mutual sufferings. So far only as the repeal of the Test Laws may be said to make them *a party*, can that denomination be justly applied to them. From the Revolution to this day, they have never associated for *any other* purpose; and whether it be prudent in the Church at this present moment to raise their temporary association to the dignity of *a party*, and thereby give them consequence and power, is well worthy the consideration of the Reviewer, and those who think like him. With regard to civil liberty, they have never been formally associated; and their general unanimity upon that subject has arisen, to their honour be it spoken, more from the principles of the individuals, than any concert with each other. As a party then united only to get the Test Laws repealed, how can the principles of any one man among them, upon a point entirely distinct from the sole object of their union, be attributed to the whole body, who confessedly at present do not entertain his sentiments? For after Dr. Price's works shall have wrought this reformation, and republicanism shall have become the creed of Dissenters, their loyalty to his majesty and the established government up to 1787, must still be universally acknowledged. When their case was published, it is admitted they might "pass for a loyal body;" and the assertion in it remains unimpeached, the bulk of them then being Nonconformists, *without being* republicans. So that, according to this consistent writer, the *inseparable* union had not taken place, and Nonconformists

still obstinately persisted in their affection to monarchical government.

The sentiments of Dr. Price himself rest not upon deduction or inference, and the late publication of extracts from a sermon preached by him to the congregation at Newington Green so long ago as in the reign of George the Second proves beyond all doubt, that at his entrance into life he felt, as the Dissenters in general have been taught to feel, a warm affection for his country, and an enthusiastic admiration of the glorious fabric of the British constitution. Describing this country, he calls it, "a land where peace, plenty, knowledge, and liberty abound and flourish. A land which has *the best constitution*, the best laws, the best king, and the best religion in the world\*." When the ardour of youth was abated, and his judgment matured by age, he still preferred the system of government under which we have the happiness to live. In his "Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty†," he says, "In order to

\* This little piece, published by Rivington, price only three pence, is entitled, "Britain's Happiness, and its full possession of Civil and Religious Liberty briefly stated and proved by the late Rev. Dr. Richard Price." It has been published by an enemy in order to injure the character of its author, but is a truly valuable performance. The Dissenters ought to wish it universally circulated and read; for as Dr. Price's works have been made the standard of *their* opinions, it shews that, in 1759 at least, they bore *no ill-will* to the establishment; and that when this country was engaged in foreign wars, they, so far from seeking to take advantage of its calamities, gave its rulers their most hearty and affectionate support.

† Thirteenth edition, published in 1776, p. 10.

" form

“ form *the most perfect constitution of government*,  
 “ there may be the best reasons for joining to such  
 “ a body of *representatives* an *hereditary* council,  
 “ consisting of men of the first rank in the state,  
 “ with a *supreme executive magistrate* at the head of  
 “ all. This will form useful checks in a legislature,  
 “ and contribute to give it vigour, union, and  
 “ dispatch, without infringing liberty ; for as long  
 “ as that part of a government which represents  
 “ the people is a *fair representation*, and also has a  
 “ negative on all public measures, together with  
 “ the sole power of imposing taxes and originating  
 “ supplies, the essentials of liberty will be preserv-  
 “ ed. We make it our boast in this country that  
 “ this is our constitution : I will not say with how  
 “ much reason !” Is it not apparent that Dr.  
 Price here had in view the British constitution, as  
 the most perfect model that could be devised ;  
 with one only improvement, viz. a more equal  
 representation of the people in the House of Com-  
 mons ? If there is any thing *republican* in that  
 wish, the present minister must come in for his  
 share of the odium, for he also has avowed senti-  
 ments in favour of that reform, and pledged  
 himself to support it. Here then Doctor Price  
 has given the most unequivocal assurance, that  
 “ his impassioned fondness for the democratic  
 “ form” did not extend beyond a fondness for a  
 limited *monarchy*.

In the year 1784 Dr. Price, and most of the  
 Dissenters, exerted themselves in support of *the*  
*prerogatives of the crown*, which they conceived to be  
 uncon-



unconstitutionally invaded. The present minister cannot have forgotten that *then* they shewed no dislike to kingly power; yet he had not the generosity, in any of the debates, to repay his obligations by even *doing justice* to their political character, and rescuing it from the most gross misrepresentations! No where, even in Dr. Price's Revolution Sermon, preached in 1789, which has given so much offence to Mr. Burke, is there a single word or expression, which shews he felt a predilection for a democratic form of government.

In the Appendix to the Review, the omission of the names of those *leaders*, from whose works the *inseparable* connection of nonconformity and republicanism is to be inferred, is in some degree supplied. Three extracts are there given from Mr. Robinson's "Plan of Lectures on Nonconformity;" and though brought forward with great parade, they are in themselves so trivial, that if it were not to expose the miserable shifts to which High Churchmen are reduced, in their attempt to fix a charge of disaffection to the British government on the Protestant Dissenters, I should not trouble my readers with them here. "Despotism," says Mr. Robinson, "is the desideratum of *most* princes;" and so it certainly may be, without being the desideratum of our's. "So much episcopacy, so much despotism," is a certain truth," says the same Mr. Robinson; and so it may be, and yet the writer be a very loyal subject: for instance, he may think, that the British constitution, most perfect *in itself*, is debased by the slavish principles of the hierarchy. The next is  
the

the strongest expression : “ Princes know no heresy  
 “ but patriotism, and no orthodoxy but despotism.”  
 In justice to Mr. Robinson, it should be remembered here, that this is extracted from a book, which is, as he tells us himself, “ an Analysis, an  
 “ Index of History, or a kind of Chapter of Contents” only. It contains the heads of lectures to assist the memory of the lecturer, and to be filled up as circumstances may require. But all men are inclined to abuse power, and the observation is too generally true. These extracts could not have occasioned a suspicion of Mr. Robinson’s loyalty in any breast but the Reviewer’s, and we learn from the highest authority, that it is unfounded ; for in the preface to the very work from which they are taken, published in 1781 (nine years before the Review) the author says : “ My pleasure has been  
 “ increased by observing *the happy constitution of our*  
 “ *government. Our mixed monarchy contains all the*  
 “ *excellencies, and provides against the evils of the*  
 “ *three sorts of government, of which it is compound-*  
 “ *ed.*” The dishonest trick in which the Reviewer is here detected is sufficient to rouse the indignation of any unprejudiced mind. For is it possible to conceive that with this passage before his eyes he could basely cite other parts of the same work, in order to impress an opinion of Mr. Robinson’s disaffection to the British government ? Or can it be supposed, with the utmost stretch of charity, that the Reviewer did not sin against better knowledge, when he thus falsely charged Dr. Price and Mr. Robinson with being republicans in principle ?

The

The Reviewer also recommends a reference to Mr. S. Palmer's "Protestant Dissenter's Catechism," from which, however, he makes no extract. Mr. Palmer has answered the charge respecting himself, and declared himself a friend to a limited monarchy. How singularly unfortunate the Reviewer, in thus endeavouring unjustly to fix on the Dissenters the character of republicans, from the writings of three of their ministers, *every one* of whom has expressly repelled the imputation !

Not more fortunate have been those advocates for the Church, who have cited, for the same purpose; the opinions of Dr. Priestley. In his "Familiar Letters to the Inhabitants of Birmingham," he refutes this calumny, and says, "all my acquaintance know, that *I am a zealous friend of a limited monarchy, such as our constitution is.*" And he shews that such have ever been his sentiments, by referring to his "Lectures on the Study of History and General Policy," written without any view to controversy, so long ago as when he was a tutor at the academy at Warrington\*.

This calumny against the Dissenters in general may be traced, like most others under which they have laboured, to the charitable offices of the priests of the establishment. It is an approved recipe of their policy, when pressed with argument in a *religious dispute*, to endeavour to destroy the popularity of their opponents, by describing them as enemies to the *political* constitution of their country. This

\* Familiar Letters, p. 13, 88:

art was practised by Dr. Sacheverell against the friends to Toleration; and Archdeacon Horsley, in his controversy with Dr. Priestley, converted his arguments against *the Trinity* into “a declaration “ of implacable enmity to *the constitution* \*,” and “ sentiments of hostility to the *political* constitution “ of his country †.”

A predilection for a republican form of government never was a distinguishing feature of the principles of the Dissenters; so far from it, that in the dissenting seminaries youth have been taught not only to *admire* the British constitution, as the most perfect form of government that human wisdom ever devised, but to *love* and *reverence* it as a source of hitherto unrivalled happiness to its subjects. And it is the opinion of many, who have good means of information, and have taken pains to ascertain the fact, that there are fewer republicans among the Dissenters, in proportion to their numbers, than among the members of the establishment itself. Notwithstanding this, the Dissenters have been so successfully branded with the odious appellation of “republicans,” that many of their fellow-subjects, especially those most ignorant of their history and general principles, now consider them as avowed enemies to the civil government of their country; and in the debates in the House of Commons, they have been treated as little better than rebels and traitors.

\* Tracts in Controversy with Dr. Priestley, p. 41c.

† Ibid. p. 434, cited at p. 34 of this work.

The Rev. Mr. Madan boldly asserts, that the principles of the *Presbyterians*, including all the denominations of Protestant Dissenters, are unquestionably republican\*. If he means by this assertion that their principles teach them to be enemies to kingly government, he is certainly mistaken; but if he annexes to the word some loose indefinite meaning, such as seems to have floated confusedly in the brain of some of the dignitaries of the establishment, it is impossible to answer the observation, until he thinks fit to give his own definition of it. But perhaps it may be thought politic for Churchmen to continue the use of it as a term of reproach and an opprobrious nick-name, which may occasionally supply the want of argument; in that way Bishop Horsley seems to have used it in the following passage. In answer to the Rev. Mr. Palmer's assertion, that a great body of Calvinists concurred in the application of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers in 1772, "*upon a general principle of liberty, disliking any interference of the magistrate in religious matters,*" Bishop Horsley says, "If the fact be as Mr. Palmer states it, I can only lament that a *republican* principle should so strongly have infected so respectable a branch of the Christian Church, as the Calvinists are in my estimation †." How the "*disliking any interference of the magistrate in religious matters*" implies a dislike to monarchical government, the Bi-

\* See before, p. 37.

† Tracts in Controversy with Dr. Priestley, p. 396, 397.



shop has not thought fit to explain, this we know, that the same *republican* principle infected Bishop Burnet, and Bishop Hoadley, with other prelates of *Whiggish* times.

In refutation of a charge so weakly supported, the Dissenters may appeal to the whole tenor of their public conduct, and to the testimonies of their princes, and the houses of parliament. But, not adverting to more ancient documents, the public are in possession of the most solemn declarations of their associated bodies, of their loyalty and affection to the present government. The Committee appointed to conduct the application for the repeal of the Test Laws, published an address to the people of England, dated the 11th of May, 1790, in which, in the name of the whole body of Dissenters, they say :

“ From the manner, however, in which our  
 “ application to parliament has been opposed, and  
 “ from the writings which, with so much virulence,  
 “ have appeared against us, it seems as if we were  
 “ regarded as disloyal subjects. But we spurn with  
 “ indignation at this charge. It is unjust in the  
 “ highest degree to cast such a reproach upon per-  
 “ sons, who have been uniformly and ardently de-  
 “ voted to the frame of our government, as set-  
 “ tled at the Revolution, and to the princes of the  
 “ house of Brunswick. For the truth of this  
 “ assertion, we appeal to the whole of our conduct  
 “ for more than a century past. The two rebel-  
 “ lions, for example, of 1715 and 1745, could  
 “ not boast the support of a single Protestant Dis-  
 “ senter.

“ senter. Nor did we content ourselves with a  
 “ negative loyalty, but engaged in active services  
 “ for the preservation of the sovereign, and the  
 “ civil and religious liberties of the nation. In  
 “ these services we exposed ourselves to the penal-  
 “ ties of the very laws we complain of. Justice  
 “ and gratitude would have required that these laws  
 “ should then have been abolished; but the only  
 “ return we received, was an indemnification for  
 “ our meritorious conduct, in daring to oppose  
 “ the enemies of the constitution of the Hanover  
 “ succession.—*While such has been the invariable*  
 “ *course of our behaviour, we cannot avoid expressing*  
 “ *our surprize and concern that we should so often*  
 “ *be reproachfully branded with the name of republi-*  
 “ *cans. If there be any meaning in this term, as ma-*  
 “ *lignantly applied to us by our enemies, it must be in-*  
 “ *tended to denote that we wish to overturn the present*  
 “ *constitution, and to establish a republic on the ruins*  
 “ *of the monarchical part of our government. But*  
 “ *every imputation of this kind we absolutely disclaim*  
 “ *and deny. The Dissenters in no-wise deserve the*  
 “ *appellation of republicans, but in common with all*  
 “ *the people of the kingdom; that is, in opposition to*  
 “ *arbitrary power. None can be more sensible than*  
 “ *we are of the excellence of the principles of our free*  
 “ *constitution, or more zealous for its preservation and*  
 “ *continuance.*”

And in an address to the people of England,  
 voted by the Protestant Dissenting Laymen and Mi-  
 nisters for the West Riding of the county of York,  
 assembled at Wakefield on September the 1st, 1791,  
 they

they declare in the strongest terms, " their decided " preference for an hereditary monarchy," and affection to the constitution as settled at the Revolution. The late address of the Protestant Dissenters at Birmingham to the king, is declaratory of the same sentiments. I will not trouble the reader with further references to, or extracts from the public proceedings of the Dissenters. Enough has been already offered in refutation of one of the most groundless, but at the same time malignant calumnies, that ever even priests invented and put into circulation.

The charge of disloyalty has been of late renewed against the Dissenters, and Dr. Price in particular has been treated by Mr. Burke with great and undeserved asperity. In a sermon, preached before the Revolution Society on the 4th of November, 1789, Dr. Price had enumerated, among the principles of the Revolution, the right of the people of England " to cashier their kings for *misconduct*." To all the Doctor's principles Mr. Burke has objected, but to this more than any other; and as to discuss them all would lead into too large a field, I shall content myself with a few observations on this only.

However light or improper the expression, the extent of the claim does not want the authority of high names to justify it. ' The Judgment of ' whole Kingdoms and Nations, concerning the ' Rights, Power, and Prerogative of Kings, and ' the Rights, Privileges, and Properties of the People; shewing the Nature of Government,' &c.

is a celebrated work ; which, if not written by Lord Somers, has been always understood to speak the genuine sentiments of the Whigs of his time. It has gone through a great number of editions, and in the very title-page, which is very diffuse, asserts ‘ the right of the people and parliament of Britain to resist and deprive their kings, for *evil government*, by King Henry’s ‘ charter,’ &c. ; and in the body of the work the same expression is used, and the right deduced from “ the common usage of England, which is the “ common law of England.” In another place it is said, “ that the people may do themselves justice “ in case of *oppression*” by the government.

Mr. Locke, the cotemporary of Lord Somers, wrote, in the reign of King William, his two treatises on government, with an express view “ *to establish the throne of our great restorer, our “ present King William ; to make good his title in “ the consent of the people ; which being the only one “ of lawful governments, he has more fully and “ clearly than any prince in Christendom : and to “ justify to the world the people of England, whose “ love of their just and natural rights, with their “ resolution to preserve them, saved the nation, “ when it was on the very brink of slavery and “ ruin\*.*” And he apologizes for answering Sir Robert Filmer’s book, who had been long dead, because “ *the pulpit of late years publicly owned*

\* See preface to his two treatises on Civil Government, Locke’s Works, vol. ii. p. 137, edition 1777.

“ his doctrine, and made it *the current divinity of the times*.” In order to shew that Mr. Locke’s principles are vastly more broad and *democratic* than Dr. Price’s, I will refer the reader to his chapter ‘ Of the Dissolution of Government,’ and for the present observe only, that at the conclusion of his ‘ Treatise on Civil Government ’ he expressly says, that the government may be forfeited by the *mis-carriages* of those intrusted with the supreme power\*. These expressions are certainly more loose than that used by Dr. Price ; and yet experience has shewn that a well-regulated state has nothing to apprehend from the pens of theorists. The disciples of Lord Somers and Mr. Locke, during the course of a hundred years, have not, *in a single instance*, excited resistance, though no one will venture to affirm that there has been no *evil government*, or temporary *oppression*, or that the administration of government has been without *mis-carriages*. Mr. Burke himself, in his letter to the sheriffs of Bristol, in 1770, when mentioning a writer, who, from

\* Locke’s Works, vol. ii. p. 311. Even King James the First, in his speech to the parliament in 1609, could say, “ A king, governing in a settled kingdom, *leaves to be king*, and degenerates into a tyrant, *as soon as he leaves off to rule according to his laws*.” Is Mr. Burke prepared to say as much ? Mr. Locke reasons thus : “ Wherever law ends, tyranny begins, if the law be transgressed to another’s harm ; and whosoever in authority exceeds the power given him by the law, and makes use of the force he has under his command to compass that upon the subject which the law allows not, ceases in that to be a magistrate ; and acting without authority, may be opposed as any other man, who by force invades the right of another.” Ibid. 295.



the multitude and spirit of the addresses in favour of the American war, drew an argument for the independence of America, says, " which (if the " fact were as he supposes) must be irresistible. For *I never knew* a writer on the theory of government so partial to authority, as not to allow that *the hostile mind* of the rulers to the people, did fully justify a change of government." Here we have not one word of a *grave* and *over-ruling* necessity, or of its being effected in a *grave* and *decorous* manner, to justify this change of government; and the expression of the *hostile mind* of a ruler, will probably convey to an English ear as loose and indefinite an idea, as his *misconduct*. The statute of the 6 Ann. c. vii. s. 1. is expressed in still more general terms; for it enacts, that he who by advisedly speaking, or writing, asserts that the parliament cannot limit the succession to the throne, (and thus cashier a *whole race of kings*, without alluding either to *necessity*, *evil government*, *oppression*, *misconduct*, *miscarriage*, or *hostile mind*) shall be guilty of high treason. It was Dr. Price's misfortune to live in times, when it was become fashionable to trace back the path from liberty to passive obedience, and when, after the enjoyment of a free government for more than a century, we are obliged to "re-learn" its principles. There is, in the above passages, such a perfect coincidence of sentiment between the Whigs, to whom we are indebted for the Revolution, speaking by the works of Mr. Locke, and the descendents of those Whigs, speaking through Mr.

Mr. Burke *in the year 1770*, and Dr. Price in 1789, that it seems unaccountable that any Whig, valuing himself upon consistency, should, *in the year 1790*, take offence at the latitude of Dr. Price's principle, though he may disapprove of the expressions in which it is conveyed.

Mr. Burke, it appears, piques himself upon the consistency of his political principles, and tells us expressly, that they are the same now as when he wrote the letter to the sheriffs of Bristol just alluded to. He must still be of opinion then, that the *hostile mind* of the governor will justify the resistance of the governed. He must still be ready to answer, if any ask him, what a free government is? "That for any practical purpose it is  
 " what *the people* think so; and that *they, and not I,*  
 " are the natural, lawful, and competent judges of  
 " *this matter* \*."

\* I have often thought, that the best way to answer Mr. Burke's late writings on the French Revolution, would be to try the experiment upon them, which Mr. Locke recommended to be tried on Sir Robert Filmer's works. "For if any one," says Mr. Locke, "will be at the pains himself, in those parts which  
 " are here untouched, to *strip Sir Robert's discourses of the flourish*  
 " *of doubtful expressions, and reduce his words to direct, positive,*  
 " *intelligible propositions, and then compare them one with another,*  
 " he will quickly be satisfied there was never so much glib nonsense put together in well-sounding English. If he think it  
 " not worth while to examine his works all through, *let him make*  
 " *an experiment* in that part where he treats of usurpation; and  
 " let him try whether he can, with all his skill, make Sir Robert *intelligible, and consistent with himself or common sense.*" Preface to his two treatises on Civil Government, Locke's Works, vol. ii. p. 137.

Indeed

Indeed the systems of Dr. Price and Mr. Burke (as he states his own *in* 1790) differ little from each other, when fairly contrasted. Dr. Price says, a king may be deposed for *misconduct*; Mr. Burke says, No! *every* misconduct will not justify resistance, but there must be a grave and over-ruling necessity accompanying it: in other words, there must be such a gross misconduct, that the people, after weighing the inconveniences of resistance, think it *necessary* to risk them all, rather than submit longer to their oppressor. After Mr. Burke has admitted (what he cannot deny) that the people must be the judges of the existence of that necessity, the only difference between the two positions is, that what is expressed in the one must necessarily be implied from the terms of the other: for a king *cannot* be deposed without the concurrence of a majority of his subjects, either in number or strength; and whenever that concurrence is obtained, the necessity is, on Mr. Burke's principles, arrived, *because they think it is*.

But admitting that a material difference did actually exist, and to the extent insisted on, it should be considered that Dr. Price wrote as a theorist, Mr. Burke as a politician. Dr. Price took the Revolution as an example, under *a general rule*, and then laid down the general rule itself; Mr. Burke, considering himself as stating under a constitution, *what that* constitution taught, could not go beyond the particular instance, which had specifically happened. This distinction renders all his reasoning from Sacheverell's trial in the 'Appeal' irrelevant to the question

question between *them*. But since 1688 there has been another revolution, by which the American provinces are become independent states, and recognized as such by this country, so that even as a politician he ought to have enlarged his rule. The principles of the ancient Whigs, as he is pleased to narrow them, justify the Revolution of 1688, “only upon the *necessity* of the case; as the *only* means left for the recovering of that *ancient* constitution, formed by the *original contract* of the British state, as well as for the future preservation of the *same* government\*.” And yet, to shew how consistent Mr. Burke is, he tells us in the ‘Appeal,’ that “he considered the Americans as standing at that time, and in that controversy, *in the same relation to England, as England did to James II. in 1688*. He believed that they had taken up arms *from one motive only, that is, our taxing them without their consent*†,” &c. It follows therefore that the colonists were justified in resisting the mother country, because they stood *in the same relation to England, as England did to James II. in 1688*, although they acted upon motives *completely dissimilar*. Thus the history of England affords *two* instances, in which Mr. Burke himself admits resistance to the governing power was justifiable, and yet he gives us a rule applicable to *one* of them only. In the one case there was a necessity, as the only means of

\* Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, p. 57.

† P. 38.

recovering the *ancient* constitution, and preserving in future the *same* government; in the other there was a necessity, as the only means of *destroying* the ancient constitution, and erecting for the future a *different* government. The choice of destroying or preserving the old government must certainly rest with the people in such emergencies; and because the Whigs of England preferred their *old* form of government, it does not follow that the patriots of France would not have been justified in *wholly destroying* theirs. It certainly is not for Mr. Burke to make the objection, since he admits that the Americans were justified in doing so.

Against Mr. Burke the Dissenters have to complain of unfair usage; they expected it at the hands of High Churchmen, but from a statesman, professing himself to be a Whig, they might hope to have experienced some candour, and even some indulgence. After it is admitted that the obnoxious positions imputed to Dr. Price, in his ‘Reflections on the late Revolution in France,’ are ever so dangerous and inimical to the present government, there is no evidence before the public that they make part of the general creed of the Dissenters. The sermon was preached before the Revolution Society, which is not a Dissenting Association, and at which a peer of the realm, a member of the Church of England, presided. That the Dissenters in general rejoice in the extension of liberty to France, I sincerely believe to be true; but it does not follow, that they exult in the horrors of a civil war, or feel pleasure in contemplating the miseries,  
generally



generally the consequences of great revolutions. If they have, in Mr. Burke's opinion, shewn too great an attachment to the democratic part of our constitution, they may remind him that there was a time when *he* thought it in danger, and curtailed the influence of the crown to preserve it. They may think it is not yet sufficiently secured from that influence, and as friends to *all* the parts of the British constitution, may offer the same apology, and in the same words, for pressing topics in favour of the part they conceive to be in danger, that he has done for his late writings in favour of the regal power. For, says he, "as any one of the  
 " great members of this (the British) constitu-  
 " tion happen to be endangered, he that is a  
 " friend *to all of them*, chooses and presses the  
 " topics necessary for the part attacked, with all  
 " the strength, the earnestness, the vehemence, with  
 " all the power of stating, of argument, and of  
 " *colouring*, which he happens to possess, and which  
 " the case demands\*."

But no *colouring* can be Mr. Burke's excuse for the manner in which he has treated Dr. Price and the Dissenters *in his second publication*; in which, among "the new principles of Whiggism, imported  
 " from France, and *disseminated from dissenting pul-*  
 " *pits*, from federation societies, and from the pam-  
 " phlets which (as containing the political creeds  
 " of those synods) are industriously circulated in all  
 " parts of the two kingdoms," we find the princi-

\* Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, p. 31.

ple of Dr. Price, to which we have by way of example alluded before, converted into this, viz  
 “ that the people may lawfully depose kings,  
 “ not only for misconduct, but *without any miscon-*  
 “ *duct at all*\*.” Through this whole work he takes for granted that Dr. Price and the Dissenters hold this, with the other principles he deprecates, and therefore makes them the objects of his keenest invective. Yet, strange to tell ! the federation societies he alludes to are *not dissenting* societies, and neither this principle, nor any of those he has collected in order to execrate, are to be found in Dr. Price’s Revolution Sermon, or have been *disseminated from a single dissenting pulpit* ! And the only authority cited to prove these are the principles of *the Dissenters*, is a pamphlet written by a professed republican, and the subject of a foreign state ! It has been sufficiently hard on the Dissenters to have had imputed to them, as a body, the sentiments of single individuals from among themselves, but it is doubly so to make them answerable for the opinions of a foreigner, with whom they have no connection.

To have their principles misconstrued, and the worst designs unjustly imputed to them, is a treatment they have not now experienced for the first time. Sacheverell in his sermon, preached against them nearly in the same terms used by Mr. Burke ; and yet neither in Sacheverell’s time, nor Mr. Burke’s, could Britain boast of more loyal subjects,

\* Appeal, p. 56.

or subjects more faithfully attached to the principles of the constitution. Sacheverell's words were, "that  
 " the old leaven of their fore-fathers is still working  
 " in their present generation ; and that this tradi-  
 " tional poison still remains in this brood of vipers,  
 " to sting us to death, *is sufficiently visible from the*  
 " *dangerous encroachments they now make upon our*  
 " *government, and the treasonable reflections they have*  
 " *published on her Majesty, God bless her ! whose*  
 " *hereditary right to the throne they have had the im-*  
 " *pudence to deny, and cancel, to make her a creature*  
 " *of their own power ; and that, by the same princi-*  
 " *ples they placed a crown upon her, they tell us,*  
 " *they (that is the mob) may reassume it at their*  
 " *pleasure.* Nay, now they have advanced them-  
 " selves from the religious liberty our gracious  
 " sovereign has indulged them, to claim a civil  
 " right, as they term it, and to juggle the Church  
 " out of her establishment, by hoisting their tole-  
 " ration into its place ; and *to convince us what alone*  
 " *will satisfy 'em, insolently demand the repeal of the*  
 " *Corporation and Test Acts, as an ecclesiastical usur-*  
 " *pation, which, indeed, under her Majesty (whom God*  
 " *long preserve for its comfort and support) is the only*  
 " *security the Church has to depend upon.*" Here  
 Sacheverell charged the Dissenters with holding that  
 the people might reassume the crown *at their plea-*  
*sure* ; but as in another place in his sermon he  
 charged *all the friends* of the Revolution with teach-  
 ing that kings may be deposed whenever the people  
*think fit\**, it is evident he meant to impute no more to

\* See before.

them than to the *Whigs* in general: and *with them* the Dissenters have not repined to take their lot.

But, say the High Church party, a Dissenter will certainly endeavour to use all the influence he possesses in order to advance his own sect, and so the public peace must be endangered by his admission to offices. His exclusion therefore imputes to him only a virtuous attachment to his own peculiar principles, and the danger becomes the greater “ the greater we suppose his virtues and abilities.” An answer has been given to this argument already, I shall therefore only remark, that in this way of reasoning his exclusion becomes not a brand of infamy, for, however unjust, it is at least an honourable distinction. But the dangers to be apprehended from the influence of virtuous citizens, increasing thus, in proportion as their virtues and abilities increase, are not, according to Bishop Parker, to be disregarded, and thus he proves it: “ If  
“ princes,” says he\*, “ would but consider how  
“ liable mankind are to abuse themselves with  
“ serious and *conscientious villanies*, they would quick-  
“ ly see it to be absolutely necessary to the peace  
“ and happiness of their kingdoms, to set up a  
“ more severe government over men’s consciences  
“ and religious persuasions, than over their vices  
“ and immorality; for *of all villains, the well-meaning*  
“ *zealot is the most dangerous*. Indulgence and

\* Preface to his Ecclesiastical Polity, p. 52.

“ toleration is the most absolute sort of anarchy;  
 “ *and princes may, with less hazard, give liberty to*  
 “ *men’s vices and debaucheries, than to their con-*  
 “ *sciences.*” Upon this it has been observed, “ That  
 “ according to Parker’s proposition, bawdy-houses  
 “ are more tolerable than conventicles !” The  
 Reviewer may possibly have adopted that notion,  
 or may think, with the reverend fathers of the  
 second council of Nice, that “ it would be less sinful  
 “ to be naught with a woman,” than to give  
 occasion for public scandal *by holding heretical opi-*  
*nions.* Thus may we be enabled to explain the  
 dark hint he gives, that ecclesiastical discipline  
 ought to be enforced. Then indeed the hierarchy  
 might triumph ; then indeed Dissenters might trem-  
 ble !

When the repeal of the Test Laws was first  
 agitated in 1787, the Dissenters in general were  
 favourably disposed to establishments, and in a high  
 degree friendly to the Church of England ; but  
 they expected that the general progress of libe-  
 rality in the world would have made some impres-  
 sion on that Church, and that upon barely request-  
 ing a restoration of rights from the justice of the  
 state, they should be permitted to enjoy them.  
 They have been disappointed ; High Churchmen  
 have insultingly told them, that they must never  
 expect favour, and that they can have dreamt only  
 of friendly sentiments towards the Church, for a  
 wish to injure it belongs to all Dissenters, which  
 the Church must know by the ill-will it feels



to them. Of that ill-will they have indeed severely felt the effects ; detraction, falsehood, and forgery have not been spared to render their characters odious, and to injure their property ; a bigotted mob has with fanatic zeal sought to deprive their brethren of their lives, and plundered and destroyed their habitations.

Moderate men, accustomed to admire the establishment as *a scheme of instruction*, well adapted in general to teach the duties of morality and religion to the people, have recoiled with horror at such fatal effects from the perversion of a religious institution into an instrument of persecution, and an engine for party politics. The disciples of Priestley and Robinson, both in and out of the Church, have increased in numbers. And this too at a time, when the clergy themselves profess to feel no confidence in the stability of the establishment. Even the *most distant probability* of the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts has been an avowed reason for the *greatest apprehension and alarm* ; and the preference given by a few paupers to a *Dissenting Sunday School* has struck the clergy and inhabitants of a populous borough with terror and dismay. In such perilous circumstances, High Churchmen may recollect that calumny and insult have never conciliated affection ; and that secret treachery, and open violence, cannot revive the confidence of friendship. When the Dissenters shall again apply to the legislature for the repeal of acts by which they feel themselves aggrieved, High Church-

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men,

men, yielding to the dictates of policy and fear, may drop their opposition to the claims of justice. They cannot make reparation for their *past* misconduct, but they may proceed with greater moderation and honesty *in future*. But should they still persist, the ruin of their Church will probably record to posterity, their folly, and their crimes.

T H E   E N D.











